# ADELAIDE:

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# *THE COUNTERCHARM.*

VOL. III.

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## A Novel.

*IN FIVE VOLUMES.*

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"SANTO SEBASTIANO; OR, THE YOUNG PROTECTOR:"
"ROMANCE OF THE PYRENEES:" AND
"THE FOREST OF MONTALBANO."

VOL. III.



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# ADELAIDE:

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# *THE COUNTERCHARM.*

## CHAPTER I.

It was evening ere Adelaide arrived at Mordaunt Priory, where she was received by Mrs. Aspenfield; who, upon her anxious inquiry for Mrs. Falkland, burst into tears.

"Oh! what is the matter?" exclaimed the terrorized Adelaide.

"Heaven alone can tell, for Rosalind will not," sobbed out Mrs. Aspenfield.—But my child,—my child, is returned to her home, the shadow of her former self; with spirits, appetite flown; taking no rest; refusing all medical aid; shunning society: and, above all things, recoiling from her children."

At this moment Mrs. Falkland rushed into the room, and flying wildly to the alarmed Adelaide, flung herself upon her bosom, in an agony of despair: but at length a flood of tears, violent and piteous, came to her relief, and drew torrents of sympathy from the eyes of her mother and her friend.

And now, in the melting tones of heart-riving anguish, Rosalind implored our heroine—" To forgive the unkindness of her late conduct to her; for that now she was dying; and not to remember her misdeeds, when she became mother to her babes."

" My dear Mrs. Falkland," said Adelaide, tenderly throwing her arms around the neck of Rosalind, and pressing her affectionately to her bosom, " I shall never be mother to your dear babes, as the wife of my guardian; even should, alas! the desponding tone of your present depressed spirits prove prophetic; since the wish—the long-cherished wish—of my guardian and my uncle is in a fair train to be realized; as I am now, my beloved friend, under a serious engagement, to become the wife of Montagu Bouverie."

"Oh! why, why did not this engagement take place sooner? or why at all?" exclaimed Rosalind, wringing her hands in an agony of augmented grief: "for, in one case, it would have prevented my undoing; but now it only adds to my distraction: since, until now, I found a consolation for my sufferings in the delusive belief, that when I was removed, my poor ill-fated Falkland would have found in you a wife deserving of his excellence; and my poor boys, a maternal protectress, who would not suffer them,—whatever the world might do,—to execrate their mother's memory."

"But," continued Mrs. Falkland, "perhaps it is not too late; that this engagement is not irrevocable; and if you confess to Lord De Moreland the state of your affection for Falkland, and the certainty of his present union being speedily dissolved, and——

"My dear Mrs. Falkland," said Adelaide, interrupting her, "my uncle already knows the state of my affection for my guardian, is that of an adoring, venerating, grateful child; and he also knows the state of my

affection for Montagu; and, from that knowledge, he was led to form an engagement for me, which is now irrevocable."

"Since such is the case," replied the agitated Rosalind, "will you account to me for this?" and she drew from a case the already mentioned head of Falkland. "Why thus, in your evident portraiture of each other, have you given in testimony, that one heart animates you both?"

Adelaide replied not; but, with a blush of pained feeling, started from her chair; and, on the eager wings of wounded delicacy's impatience, she flew to her now long-deserted boudoir, and, after a terrorized search of a few moments, she returned to Mrs. Falkland, and presented to her the portrait of his Rosalind, as the performance of her guardian.

"There, Mrs. Falkland," she exclaimed, whilst tears from the font of purified innocence rolled down her glowing cheeks—"I have the pleasure of presenting you with your own resemblance; the fractured parts so exactly corresponding, that none *can doubt* their having been once united."

" Should your memory, Mrs. Falkland, prove a defaulter, I can inform you of the circumstance, which led you to utter, with impressiveness, ' That you, and my guardian, had one heart connectively, to animate you both :' and I firmly believing the sympathetic influence, it struck my romantic affection that I could form a pretty picture from the idea."

" The face of my guardian being a study familiar to my grateful contemplation, I readily portrayed it to my satisfaction; but yours I could not succeed in to my wishes: when, as in all my troubles from the hour of my orphan calamity, I applied for aid to my dear guardian; who, charmed with the little attempt, (because it was in proof of your mutual affection,) drew your portrait himself for me: and thus encouraged by him, I meant to have presented it to you; but one unlucky morning, Frederick giving the portraits to his brother to kiss them, poor Danvers, with infantine, thoughtless prowess, severed the ivory as you see."

" Oh, Danvers! Danvers! in prophetic inspiration *you* severed your parents, as

your transgressing mother now has done!" exclaimed Mrs. Falkland, in a new burst of almost phrensied anguish.

Her trembling parent could endure no more;—when, falling on her knees before her child, implored her in the most affecting terms that ever the heart of fond affection prompted, "To confide in her almost distracted mother."

Adelaide now arose, to leave them to unrestrained confidence; but Rosalind, although convulsed with agitation, detained her by a powerful grasp. Again Mrs. Aspenfield pathetically supplicated, and Rosalind threw herself upon her neck, almost phrensied by her feelings; but, in a moment more, with a promptitude that awakened alarm of fleeting reason, she snatched her mother from her supplicant posture, yet still clinging to her, she articulated in heart-riving tones—

"Such a posture to an unworthy child, becomes not a mother!—An unworthy child, who, in blind credulity, gave herself up to a baneful passion, to beguile her of the most perfect happiness that ever fell to the lot of mortal!"

"Yes, I was most happy; but my weak intellect could not sustain the intoxicating cup of mortal bliss. I was spoiled by indulgence; and, in the malady of wilful madness, I insulted my best friends; banished my almost superhuman Falkland, from his home, his country, his happiness.—Then, then, in the climax of my folly, I fled from the honourable protection of my husband's friends; of my own exemplary mother; to the fell mansion of dissipation, where all was contagion; and where, in the blind fervour of my headstrong jealousy, I cared not what I did; until, poor dupe of systematic villany! I was decoyed down a direful precipice, where I found my senses as I met my ruin."

Mrs. Aspenfield, uttering a piteous groan, fell senseless by her daughter's side. Rosalind wildly shrieked; and Adelaide implored her to desist.

"Fear not," she impressively said, "but my exertions will restore her; and do not summon the house, to witness the unguarded moments of your mutually tender feelings, when she recovers, to hear the toils

which villany has entrapped her child in.—Do, dear Mrs. Falkland, for your mother's—your husband's—your children's sake, forbear to awaken any surmises in the minds of your domestics to your prejudice:—but see! I told you I should bring Mrs. Aspenfield to herself again, without collecting all the house about us."

"Oh, Adelaide! Adelaide!" exclaimed Rosalind, sobbing convulsively, I deserve not this heavenly charity; since I did not do, as I now am done by. I, cruel, cruel, infatuated monster that I was! I attended not to the preservation of your fame; nor did I refuse, as you now do, to entertain an unjust suspicion of the friend I loved.—Oh, my mother! I plainly perceive you do, what Adelaide does not, you believe I have dishonoured my husband;—but there, indeed, you wrong me."

"Then, if there is a particle of pity in your composition, Rosalind," exclaimed her mother, wildly grasping her hand, "tell me then what you have done? Any thing I can bear to hear, since you have not dishonoured your husband."

"I have dishonoured myself, madam,"

lowly, and tremulously, Mrs. Falkland articulated, as she sunk at the feet of her mother: "I have abused the confidence reposed in me by the most generous of mankind,—who left me unlimited credit at his banker's; and, through that power, I have drawn for thousands, lost by me at the gaming table. I have forfeited my claim to my husband's esteem; and can you wonder that my heart is breaking?"

Mrs. Aspenfield now tenderly raised her culprit, but now most penitent child, and wept the bitterest tears of agonized affliction over her: but at length she said:

"But, my poor, infatuated child! need Falkland know this fatal error? Cannot my all suffice to pay this debt? and, believe me, unreluctantly I will throw myself upon my brother William's bounty for subsistence."

"And cannot I be of use?" said the shocked, but tenderly sympathizing Adelaide; "although unknown to my guardian I scarcely know how; but you can instruct me, Mrs. Aspenfield."

"My mother! my friend!" exclaimed the sensibly affected Rosalind; pressing

each, with grateful fervour, to her grief chilled bosom. "Do not suppose I will ever consent to ruin you, my mother; and as to you, my generous, forgiving Adelaide, your hand is now engaged, and therefore your fortune is in honour's bank, and must not be diminished. I cherish no doubt, believe me, of my fatally mated Falkland paying the debt, enormous as it is, without even one rebuke; he will pay his thousands, nay, his tens of thousands down, without a reprimand; but with these thousands will be swept away from the tablet of his heart, esteem for his transgressing wife."

"Tens of thousands, my child!"

"Ah! madam, twenties!—Little, little did this dear Adelaide know her beautiful proof of gratitude was destined to save my husband and children from ruin, brought on by the madly transgressing Rosalind."

"Excuse me to night the horror of naming the tremendous sum I have been despoiled of. Poor Adelaide has had no refreshment since her arrival; nor has she seen the children of a diabolical mother, to give them her pity's kisses, mingled

with those of her fond affection. After she has seen my unfortunate boys, after she has had some tea, I will endeavour to relate how Helena and her group contrived to lure me on to ruin."

Adelaide visited the nursery; had tea; and then at length the poor heart-rived penitent commenced a brief narrative of the toils her own reprehensible folly, in madly yielding to the erring dictates of an unjust and phrensied passion, led her into.

"Never having felt the smallest propensity towards any species of gaming," she said, "Helena found much difficulty in persuading me to join in any game of hazard; and solely to oblige her, or from having lost the powers of my mind, by their absorption in one direful theme, I at length complied; but soon, too soon, I engaged in play, through choice, on finding the interest it excited could draw me from the anguished contemplation of my domestic calamity; and for some time I continued the dangerous pursuit, as a successful votary of fortune; but at last the favour of the capricious goddess was withdrawn from me, and I lost hundred after

hundred to Helena, her brother George, a Mrs. Townly, and Sir James Lovegold; a *partie quarre*, whom, I firmly now believe, the legends of scandal could not libel, and who were all that now remained of the numerous circle which were assembled at Rockmount, when I first went thither, except Mr. Saville's *bon vivant* companions, and a Mr. Bellenden.

"The name has sympathetically attracted you, Adelaide, as that of your cousin Frederick; who, I now can tell you, was, with his father, trepanned, by the vindictive family of the man your uncle wounded, on board a vessel bound for Africa; and, after encountering a variety of fortunes in that quarter of the globe, your uncle married a Dutch girl of immense property, and settled at the Cape of Good Hope.

"But at length both your uncle and his young wife dying without increase of family, all their property devolved to your cousin Frederick, who lost no time in remitting it to London, and himself returned to Europe, where he has since passed his time, roving about the continent, wherever he could do so compatible

with safety, until a few weeks since, when he arrived in England; from whence, he says, it was his intention shortly to proceed to Ireland, in quest of all that might yet remain of his uncle St. Leger's family; although of that unfortunate relative's own direful fate, his father's anxious inquiries had obtained information a short period before his death, which it had accelerated.

"And this Mr. Bellenden, this to me direful cousin of yours, is one of the most transcendently handsome men I have ever seen, and one of the most fascinating in manners and conversation; and soon understanding that I had been some time in Italy, he paid me particular attention: attention which I solely ascribed to that cause; but, alas! Adelaide, I grieve to tell you, it was proved to me to spring from a less innocent source; for I have discovered this fascinating cousin of yours to be a libertine, if not something even yet more reprehensible.

"Bellenden for a length of time took no part in our gambling, but used to sit by my elbow for whole hours in apparent anxiety for me, until my losses, from hundreds, be-

came thousands; and one fatal night, led on by the demon of that direful power which had thus usurped dominion over me, I had lost twenty thousand pounds to the leaguers, Bellenden took my place, and proposed to the compact an extraordinary sort of odds—'he would stake forty thousand pounds for their demands upon me;' when they, depending upon the disinclination he had evinced to cards and dice, as a proof positive of his being no adept, closed the proposition, and lost all to Bellenden, who now became, in consequence, my sole creditor; when, with infatuated madness, I entered the lists with him, and that night decreased my disgraceful debt five thousand pounds.

"But I need not harass you with the information of how the poor devoted dupe was alternately led to hope, and then despair, until I lost a sum that would harrow up your very souls to hear of. Then Bellenden displayed his cloven foot, then he insulted me with avowing, 'It was not for money he played, but for a higher recompense; since understanding from Mrs. Saville I was separated from an unfaithful

husband, and finding me, through choice, in the society of Mrs. Saville and Mrs. Townly, he entertained no doubt of their example in their management of gambling difficulties, would influence me to confer the honour on him of leading me to reprisals for the slights my husband had paid to my exalted charms.'

"Oh! never, never shall I forget my sensations in that horrid moment! my brain seemed on fire, my heart the seat of torturing anguish; and, with the frantic indignation with which I was inspired, I in silent scorn rushed from the insulter. Oh! what a night, or rather morning, was passed by me! But think, oh! think, my mother! can I deserve one particle of compassion, when I flew from your protection to that of a monster of iniquity, in Helena? who, as soon as she arose, came to my apartments, and said all her wily rhetoric could urge to persuade me to wipe off my tremendous debt to Bellenden, by a still more tremendous crime.

"Oh! my mother! my friend! whilst such dire insults were offering to my own purity, and to my ardent affection for my

almost superhuman husband, I wonder now my tottering reason was not overthrown; but my haughty spirit was subdued by the terrible consciousness, that I was the founder of every insult I had received; and that, I believe, saved my tortured pride from becoming the destroyer of my senses.

"To Helena I listened in the sullen silence of despair: but scarcely had she departed, to leave me to reflect upon her advice, when my long truant judgment resumed its full dominion. My husband's honour, his property, were at stake, and I made not a question which to sacrifice, although terror lay in the horrible alternative; though assured, that when I wrote the fatal draft, I should sign away my happiness in the blasted confidence of my generous husband.

"My spontaneous resolution formed, I summoned Pryor to prepare for our immediate return home; and not brooking to depart from Rockmount without discharging my fatal, my disgraceful debt, since that would be to sully, and to sully would be to blast, my reputation with the infa-

mous suspicion of my being, for one instant, undecided in my determination. I therefore wrote the tremendous draft, and on the wings of wild desperation I flew with it to my undoer, and with the impetuosity of my despair put it into his hand, and retreated with the same precipitance I had entered, considering each second I inhaled the same air with him an insult to my matchless Falkland.

"In less than half an hour I quitted Rockmount, without seeing or hearing more of Bellenden or Helena; and to my home I returned, a wretch, a disgraced monster of ingratitude to a confiding husband, here to pray for death as my only refuge from misery, and as the only hope my crime has left my adored husband of ever again knowing domestic happiness."

The direfully agitated Rosalind's auditors were most sympathetic ones; but poor Mrs. Aspenfield wept until she was sick at heart.

"My mother," the heart-rived penitent at length continued, "you now perceive, was I *wretch enough* to accept your maternal sacrifice, it could not save the know-

ledge of my crime from Falkland, since I doubt not the draft has been presented. But it is not the absolute loss of so great a portion of our wealth that has thus consigned me to despair, for our estates will be unencumbered still; it is the infamy of my conduct, by such an unfeminine, diabolical pursuit; my betraying the confidence of my husband, and proving to him what a weak, what a faulty mind is mine. Then can you wonder I am subdued, or that I wish to die, since my life I have thus dishonoured?"

"Mrs. Falkland," said Adelaide, with gentle affecting impressiveness, as she clasped her tenderly round the neck, "I will not pretend to touch upon what you owe to my guardian's peace, will not presume to speak upon what your deeply seated piety will persuasively dictate, when the present natural tumult of your dismayed, your anguished feelings, becomes less torturing; but I must presume to arouse your attention to what imperiously demands it, lest the blighting voice of suspicion should be led to breathe its baneful influence against you."

"You cannot at all suppose, my beloved friend, that my guardian will tell to the world the imprudence the wife he adores has been trepanned into; nor is it probable my diabolical cousin, or yours, will proclaim their own villany; and no compelled alteration in your style of living will betray it: then beware, my dear, dear Mrs. Falkland, how you awaken suspicion relative to the cause of your present altered aspect. Sickness answers all questions awakened by such a conspicuous change; then why not let the world and your domestics suppose indisposition is your ailment, by submitting to medical advice?

"Medicine I know must prove inutile in mental maladies; but for the health of your fame, allow Mr. Duncan to attend you. Tell him, what indeed is true, that my guardian's absence has caused the grief which has subdued you; and should he order medicine for you, and if you depute me the giver of it, I must surely manage badly if I annoy you by it."

Mrs. Aspenfield now effectually pleading in unison with Adelaide, Mr. Duncan (the successor of Falkland in the practice of

Mr. Oldworth,) was immediately summoned; and who being under incalculable obligations to Falkland, and having the memory of them ever glowing in his heart, flew on the wings of gratitude to Mordaunt Priory; where he soon pronounced that Rosalind had told him truly, that she had grieved herself ill, since he found about her every symptom of an impending nervous fever.

## CHAPTER II.

Alarm thus given to Adelaide, nothing could induce her to quit the apartments of Mrs. Falkland during the night; and not her pillow for one moment, except when the opium Mr. Duncan found it necessary to give her was operating; then the ardent hearted Adelaide, enthusiastic in her zeal for the preservation of her guardian's happiness, put her hastily formed project into execution; that of addressing Mr. Bellenden, not taking the liberty of any animadversion upon his conduct—not degrading her guardian by any allusion to his refunding any part of the not more disgracefully lost, than won, enormous sum; but, after a self-introduction to a cousin whom she had in infancy been taught to cherish estimation of, as son to one of the most amiable of men and attached of brothers, she proceeded to give a simply brief history of herself since her calamitous deprivation of parents: in doing which, she portrayed, with consummate skill and

affecting pathos, the full extent of her incalculable obligations to Mr. and Mrs. Falkland; depicted their virtues; their fervent attachment; their happiness; and all that could awaken interest for them; or unto the distress she herself was assailed by on the return of Mrs. Falkland from Rockmount, so overpowered by some direful mental affliction, that she was subdued by it to a bed of sickness, and had confessed to her mother, and to her, that fatal losses at play were the cause of her sufferings, and that now, therefore, she took the liberty of addressing him, as her relative, to discover the state of the case for her and Mrs. Aspenfield, to enable them, if possibility would admit of it, to lessen the distress of Mrs. Falkland relative to her transgression.

Adelaide's letter, well calculated to touch every tone of honour, pity, and principle, without making a direct appeal to any of them, she despatched at early dawn by Dennis.

Morning arrived to verify the prediction of Mr. Duncan; for by that time Rosalind was in a high nervous fever; and to aug-

ment the distress of Adelaide, Mrs. Aspenfield was seriously ill from the same cause —an afflicted heart; and, like her daughter, unable to leave her bed. Neither invalid could endure even the momentary absence of our heroine, as from her they derived all of consolation their misery could know: however, at length Mrs. Aspenfield fortunately feeling more for her child than for herself, requested Adelaide to dedicate the chief of her time to Rosalind, but sometimes to come and drop her magic balms into her wounds: and to this tender sympathy and alternate care Adelaide devoted herself, experiencing every aid and attention from Lord and Lady Beechbrook, who did all that attachment and humanity could do for the relief of the sick, and the comfort of the nightly and daily vigilist, the affectionate Adelaide; who, in all her lamentations to these kind friends, betrayed not the dire cause of Mrs. Falkland's illness.

Dennis, travelling day and night post in chaises, the way his kind mistress, in remembrance of his lost limb, arranged for his conveyance, returned on the third

evening after his departure, bearing a letter from Mr. Bellenden, which she congratulated herself upon having taken the precaution not to open in the apartment of either of her invalid friends, since she could not suppress a shriek of joy when she beheld, carefully enclosed within it, the draft of Rosalind, shivered into useless atoms; and now with eager rapture she perused:—

"Accept my most sincere thanks, my dear cousin, for your kind acknowledgment of having been taught to estimate me as the son of an amiable man; an esteem that it will now be my proud effort to continue to myself, through my own endeavours to merit it.

"And still further is my gratitude powerfully awakened by my amiable cousin, for so happily affording me the power of giving up a most annoying trust; for as such, believe me, I considered the tremendous deposite of your imprudent friend; to secure it from those, who not feeling the incalculable debt of gratitude to the name of Falkland which I do, for their tender care of my once friendless cousin, might

not have dealt as disinterestedly by it as I was bound to do, through gratitude to Mr. Falkland; for although yet personally unknown to you, I had learned from my solicitor, Mr. Lawe, what a guardian the child of my tenderly remembered cousin Ellen had found; and how he had formed her mind to excellence.

"The sweet, the affecting, the fascinating portrait you have sent me of your own heart, my cousin, in the impressively pathetic narrative of gratitude's unvarnished record, makes me sicken with anxiety to remove from your mind the direful impression you must have received of me; and I would fly on the wings of that impatience I feel, to make my defence in person, did not delicacy to your friend detain me here, to crush the malicious innuendoes of the vile Mrs. Saville, whose vindictive spirit is aroused by her destined prey being safely extricated from her iniquitous toils.

"Induced by the pressing invitation of Mr. Saville, whom I knew abroad, to visit Rockmount, where I found Mrs. Falkland, and soon learning she was wife to your exemplary guardian, I paid her that atten-

tion which my gratitude as your relative, and my estimation of her husband, inspired, although induced to assiduities much less honourable, by the encouragement and insinuations of Mrs. Saville; which, with the circumstance of finding her in the society of such women, led me to feel alarm for the principles of her who had aided in rearing you, and promptly I became her wary observer, and soon I exonerated her from all of levity that could militate against the honour of her husband; from all which could arise, in undisguised form, to threaten it; but from the unfortunate propensity she had been trepanned into imbibing, I trembled for what mining villany might effect through its insidious snares; and in turn became the accurate investigator of those she played with; and soon I found the fearful odds of dishonourable dealing were against her.

"The course I should have adopted with almost any other individual encompassed by such toils, would have been to inform them of the perils which encompassed them; but I saw that her mind was

warpt from its natural bias by the influence of the green-eyed monster, (which, her communicative cousin informed me, had acquired invincible dominion over her); from which, conjecturing that rash impetuosity of feeling was her guide, I felt assured that gentle measures were not likely to prove efficacious.

"Although having a natural antipathy to every species of play, I had myself initiated, some few years since, abroad, in all the arts of dishonourable gambling, to save a very young friend of mine from a nest of unprincipled gamesters, who had planned his ruin; and thus an adept of superior skill than even this iniquitous league at Rockmount are, I formed my plot, extricated your friend from her impending peril, and entrapped her completely into my power, when I discovered the fatal mania to be more deeply rooted than I had been aware of, and my task of cure became more difficult and more necessary; and I then led her on into a most complete gulf of ruin, had my toils been spread by villany, or the power over her husband's property been unconfided to her; when I

offered her an alternative, that I had firm conviction, from the observations I had made of her purity of heart, would, through horrorized indignation, arouse her to a full and potent sense of her transgression, and effect, by one agonizing operation, a permanent and radical cure.

"The event proved me a true diviner; the shock was powerful, and awakened all the slumbering sublimity of her soul; when, beautifully arrayed in the firm, unfaultering purity that was inherent there, she spurned at my alternative, and turned to meet the reproaches of her husband for such an abuse of power, with a desperation of courage that still trembled to brave the resentment she incurred.

"The draft for fifty-five thousand pounds I received with grief, that such confiding generosity in a husband could have been so repaid; but that draft I only took to restore; since that enormous sum, in every stage it was hazarded, was neither fairly lost nor won; and I reserved it only more powerfully to establish the cure I had performed; and to present, through you, as an offering of your family's gratitude to

a guardian who has reared you to be the pride and ornament of our house; but, in my operation, I grieve to find my patient's health has been affected: but sincerely I trust the enclosed remedy will prove infallible; and that you may be able to procure for me the full forgiveness of your fair friend, for the dire insult I appeared to offer her; for the pain I inflicted; since I assure her, on the faith of a man who hopes he has proved himself not devoid of honour, that the plot I rescued her from was deep and direful.

"In the cherished hope of seeing my lovely cousin when existing impediments are removed, and of being assured by herself that she regards me, I have the pleasure to subscribe myself

"My dear Adelaide's faithful friend,

"and highly estimating kinsman,

"FREDERICK BELLENDEN."

The exultation that thrilled through the heart of Adelaide, as she perused this letter, that Bellenden was her mother's relative, could only be exceeded by her joy at having received so powerful a portion

of consolation to yield to the penitential despair of Mrs. Falkland.

The feeling-hearted, affectionate Adelaide, made no unnecessary delay in administering this anodyne to the affliction of Mrs. Aspenfield, and then hastened to the bedside of poor Rosalind, and, with every tender precaution, revealed, by degrees, the full extent of her obligations to Mr. Bellenden; even at length by reading his whole letter for her; and although joy and gratitude subdued her to the most violent burst of tears, yet they had no alarming effect, for still they were tempered by a powerfully humiliating painful sense of her own reprehensive conduct: but in the first moments of her knowledge of her escape from such a train of villany, was not the time of sufficient calmness to determine whether she would or not conceal her direful transgression from her husband. Ardent love, terrorized at the idea of sinking yet lower in his estimation than her wild deforming jealousy must have degraded her, led her fervently to cling to the wish for concealment; but still from this her ingenuous nature re-

coiled, as an unworthy project, spurning the idea of shielding herself from the investigation of a husband such as hers.

At the desire of Rosalind, Adelaide allowed not the post to go out the following day without a letter to Mr. Bellenden, such as he fully merited from her, and from the devoted imprudent woman he had stooped to wear the mask of libertinism to serve.

In despite of the distress which remained to pain the bosom of Rosalind, so much anguish had been removed from her mental sufferings, that her bodily ills, ceasing to be nourished by them, began their decrease; but not so rapidly as not still to require the unremitting care and attention of Mr. Duncan and the tender Adelaide for full a fortnight longer.

At this period, and ere the delicately framed Adelaide had time to recover her impaired looks, Lord De Moreland and Montagu Bouverie arrived at De Moreland Castle; from whence they came on the wings of the wind to Mordaunt Priory, to visit our heroine; when learning the

shock they sustained, on beholding her wan and languid aspect, had been caused by her attendance upon her friends in severe indisposition, they both promptly determined that nothing now should induce them to relinquish the suit they came to press;—"for Adelaide's assent to her immediate union with Montagu."

Lord De Moreland, although disappointed of the information he had gone to Ireland in search of; there found a clew to discover, as he believed, what he had wandered many a successless league in pursuit of; but which must now lead him into the north of Spain; and as, for safety, he must go thither up the Mediterranean, and the length of his absence indefinite, though most probably for months, he was anxious to leave his Adelaide in the bosom of tender, safe, and honourable protection.

Bouverie, on his part, was as anxious to receive the precious deposite in his care; from the firm conviction, that through Adelaide he should find the restoration of his lost happiness; and most eloquently he now united in the request of Lord De

Moreland to his amazed and agitated niece, to become a wife at the expiration of one week.

" Oh, my uncle!" Adelaide exclaimed, with tears of terrified timidity trembling in her downcast eyes, " do not, do not say you wish me to be married before the return of my guardian."

" His presence, my love," replied his lordship, " would be a high gratification to us all: but if you delay for his return, you wait also for my absence; for, alas! I cannot postpone my departure until the arrival of Falkland; and when my Adelaide learns, that complying with my supplication will remove a painful weight of anxiety from a heart not too happy, she will not find power in her gentle nature to refuse my petition."

" No, my uncle, no: well may you feel assured your plea must win your suit.—Marry me then, my lord, whenever it pleases you and Montagu:" and now upon the bosom of her grateful uncle she hid her blushing, agitated face; whilst Montagu pressed her trembling hand, with gratitude's enthusiasm, to his throbbing heart.

"Whenever I leave you, Adelaide," said his lordship, tenderly kissing her, "people do nothing but torment my sweet, feeling-hearted child, into affliction and ill looks, by their jealousy, or sickness, or some annoyance: but now I shall leave you with Montagu, I shall cherish no fears for your happiness; since your husband cannot choose but love you; and can only live to be the guardian of your peace: and since this anxious wish is now acceded to by my child, I shall leave Montagu at De Moreland Castle, to be near his Adelaide; and shall myself set out for Roscoville to-morrow, to meet, by appointment, my lawyers there."

Lord De Moreland, and Bouverie, wishing to see Mrs. Falkland, were conducted by Adelaide to her, whom Lord De Moreland took an early opportunity of informing, how speedily he meant to dispose of his niece; and although Rosalind felt a powerful shock of painful regret, at the afflicting idea of so shortly being deprived of her tender nurse, the fascinating soother of her sorrows, yet she bore the intelligence with more fortitude than she

expected; since she anticipated the marriage of her friend as a probably prompt event. "And perhaps," she said, "a better period could not have been arranged for it; since that day her physician had ordered for her change of air, and scene, the moment she could bear the motion of travelling, even twenty miles a day; and her mother had proposed a tour to Scotland, to visit her relatives there; and since she was to be deprived of Adelaide, she thought she would accede to her mother's proposition."

Mrs. Falkland requested his lordship, and Bouverie, to make the Priory their home; and to commence so doing, by staying to dine: and as they could not take Adelaide away from her to De Moreland Castle, they gratefully assented.

Lord De Moreland delayed not paying Lord Beechbrock the necessary compliment of writing to inform him of his intention, relative to his fair temporary ward's immediate union; but Lord and Lady Beechbrook were gone that day to a dinner-party, at some distance; so that the Priory

inmates having no addition to their circle, many arrangements relative to the approaching nuptials were unrestrainedly discussed.

Ere they adjourned to the drawing-room after dinner, Montagu congratulated Adelaide upon the intelligence he had received from Dennis, of her having heard tidings of her lost cousin, Mr. Bellenden; when instantly the agitation of Mrs. Falkland became so excessive, that our attentive heroine in alarm started from her seat, and flying to Rosalind, entreated her to retire, as she feared the smell of so much dinner had proved too much for her invalid senses.

"No, my Adelaide, no, I shall not retire; since believe not that I can continue an ungrateful, an unworthy monster, all my life," Rosalind replied, with renovating firmness; and who now, to the amazement of Mrs. Aspenfield and Adelaide, entered upon a full, ingenuous avowal of her own conduct, from her wild unfounded jealousy, to her transgressions at Rockmount, even producing the letter of

Mr. Bellenden, which Adelaide had given to her, as a valuable testimonial of her purity.

" And this humiliating narrative of my own phrensied misdeeds," she added, " I felt myself arbitrarily called upon to give to the uncle and to the intended husband of this angel Adelaide, as a tribute of my gratitude to her; to portray for them the beauty of a heart, that, after such cruel insults and diabolical injustice, offered by me, led her to every exertion, to save my peace, my fame; and enchained her to my pillow, night and day, administering gentle pity's sweetest balms, and nursing me, as the unoffending sister of her fond affection."

" Through gratitude to Mr. Bellenden," she continued, " perhaps I ought to make this transaction public; but I own I possess not sufficient magnanimity to blazon my transgressions to all the world. To my husband only will I further publish them; as I shrink in horror from the torturing idea of my children ever knowing their mother was so culpable."

Lord De Moreland, and Bouverie, were

as eager in assurances of inviolable secrecy, as they were eloquent in eulogium upon that magnanimous generosity, which had led her into honouring them with her confidence; which operated with all the effect upon their hearts she had intended; and when Montagu retired that night, to seek his rest, he was as enthusiastically in love with the mind of Adelaide, as he was infatuatedly fascinated by the exterior of the even yet too tenderly remembered Lady Marian Harley.

On the subsequent day Lord De Moreland departed for Roscoville; and in the course of the morning Bouverie went to Doctor Birch's to present for his lordship, to his amiable friend Mellifont, a living of three hundred pounds per annum, which had just dropped in his lordship's advowson, in the county of Kent; and not too far distant from Doctor Birch's, for his attending to the school, and performing his duty at his church.

Bouverie was sensibly affected, on beholding his revered preceptor, and his amiable school-fellow William, reduced to such an afflicting state of helplessness;

nor did he attempt to restrain those drops of sympathy, as unmanly weakness, which the bitter tears they wept on seeing him, excited.

The joy of Mellifont, at this most unexpected smile of fortune, could only be exceeded by his gratitude.

"For now," he exclaimed, "I can yield an asylum of comfort to my adored mother, and sister; whom I have the grief to tell you, my dearest friend, have been turned out of my father's house, to make way for an abandoned woman, who has obtained dominion over his mind, perverting every good principle there; and for now more than two months have I been at my wit's ends, striving to afford them support."

"Oh, Mellifont!" said Montagu, upbraidingly, "and could you suffer your mother, your sister, to feel the deprivation of any comfort that I could have supplied?"

"My generous, ever-bountiful friend!" replied the grateful Mellifont, "unless driven to the last extremity, I would not have laid your ready benevolence under further contribution: but now, oh! now, most happy, happy being! I have a house, a

home, a purse, for every comfort, to invite my amiable, my revered mother, my beloved sister, to share with me!"

"And now, my dear Mellifont! ere we break up our private conference," said Montagu, "I have to request you to get inducted as speedily as possible as an intervening Sunday will permit it, to do honour to your best canonicals, which you must have in prime order next Thursday, as Lord De Moreland has commissioned me to engage you to marry a couple for him."

Mellifont gazed, with anxious scrutiny, at his friend, whose emotion of countenance betrayed the secret; when confessing that Adelaide was to be his bride, the congratulations of Mellifont were those of enthusiastic rapture; for Mellifont believed no connubial happiness could be more complete, than that prepared by auspicious fate for Bouverie.

Upon Montagu's return from Doctor Birch's, he found Lord and Lady Beechbrock, who had arrived at the Priory, to offer their congratulations, and their services, upon every point in which the yet not perfectly convalescent state of Mrs.

Falkland must prevent her from acting in; when Rosalind finding it a matter not unpleasant to the youthful bride-elect, invited these attached friends to remain, and pass the day; during which they found full cause to be highly charmed with the intended husband of their beloved Adelaide: and Lady Beechbrock, at Rosalind's request, wrote letters to her tradespeople in town, to have several articles of the bridal paraphernalia put in hand immediately.

## CHAPTER III.

We conceive that it would be a matter of little interest to the majority of our readers to be presented with a full detail of how Montagu and Adelaide passed the remainder of this week of wooing; and now knowing our young heroine so well, we flatter ourselves they will conclude it glided away most decorously: yet during this week, strange as it may appear, although passionately enthusiastic in admiration of music, and vocal music more particularly, Bouverie shrunk from the idea of hearing Adelaide sing, and rejoiced the state of Mrs. Falkland's health prevented her from promoting any exhibitions of harmony; and for this reason, that he felt conviction, from Adelaide's extreme timidity, and from her having had no professional instructor, he should find her far, far inferior to Lady Marian Harley, whose vocal superexcellence had aided so powerfully in his fascination; and eager for Adelaide's complete conquest over his affection, he deter-

mined to obtain the first Italian master that London could supply for her, from whose instruction she should have benefited some time, ere he should cease manœuvring for not hearing her strains, lest comparison should prove to her disadvantage.

On the morning preceding her nuptials, among various packages, arrived a most superb present from Mr. Bellenden to Adelaide, of a complete suit of pink diamonds, inferior in value to none of the brilliants in Mr. Mordaunt's bequest, accompanied by a letter to entreat her acceptance of a little token of his esteem, and to apologize for not attending her approaching wedding; to which, with Mrs. Falkland's permission, Lord De Moreland had invited him, both as a compliment to the maternal family of Adelaide, and from the idea of its effectually crushing any calumniating suspicion against Rosalind, if such should ever be awakened by the infamous Mrs. Saville.

About noon the same day Lord de Moreland arrived, accompanied by Mr. Coke, who just remained at the Priory finally to

arrange the marriage settlements, and then flew back to Roscoville Abbey, where all was tumult and confusion;—from which Lord De Moreland was happy to escape, and leave all to the patient heads of civilians to arrange;—tumult that burst forth from the moment his lordship had intimated to Lady Leyburn that her residence in any of his dwellings was become inconvenient to him;—that therefore he must request her immediate removal, with her family, to the seat he presented her with in Norfolk; and informed her, that from the opinion of his lawyers of the lists of debts and files of unpaid bills of his late grandfather being nothing but piles of collusion and fraud, he was determined not to pay one shilling of them, but where the law adjudged the demands to be fair and equitable.

These were blows which Lady Leyburn had been totally unprepared for; since she had built her hopes upon the indolence of her brother, and his sensitive honour, which she had never entertained a doubt would lead him to yield himself up to beggary, sooner than that an individual should lose

one shilling by his progenitor. Under this belief, she had prepared bills herself as substitutes for those sent in by the incorruptible, and entered into collusive arrangements with those who could be bribed, to share in their chance of booty; and now such an overthrow to such an enriching project, was more than her temper could endure, and led her on to every species of reviling against her brother, as a man devoid of even common honesty; but in this manœuvre she found her hope was indeed forlorn of entrapping his feelings to her purpose.

Adelaide was rationally, not romantickly in love; for her tenderness had arisen upon the basis of many a year's esteem; she therefore perceived nothing deficient in the affection of Montagu for her, but took for granted, that, as he wished to make her his wife, he preferred her to any other woman, and therefore required no protestations of what, she thought, facts confirmed: and so grateful she felt to Heaven for allotting her a husband so amiable, so beloved by her, so consonant to the wishes of her guardian and her uncle, that she had no-

thing to disturb her but the natural agitation of a religious and feeling mind, deeply reflecting on the impending awful event: she therefore thought it strange, that the night preceding her nuptials should be passed by her in all the misery of approaching sickness, since the mere restlessness of agitated sensibility she could have readily accounted for; but the state she was in had something more than that mingled with it; and, when she arose, her flushed cheeks and heavy eyes might have proclaimed to all indisposition, only that all around her were so convinced that Adelaide would be more than commonly agitated, they ascribed with one consent her change of aspect to that cause.

In the parish church of Mordaunt Priory, our heroine beautifully, though simply attired, was united to Montagu Bouverie, by the grateful Mellifont; given away by her uncle; her bridemaids the juvenile Lady Mary Beechbrock, and a Miss Delemere, the daughter of a neighbouring baronet, a lately won friend of Adelaide's; and in the presence of Lord and Lady Beechbrock, Mrs. Aspenfield, Rosalind, the

rector of the parish, Obearn, and Dennis; and had it been the funeral service of Adelaide, Mrs. Falkland, Norah, and Dennis, could scarcely have shed a greater flow of tears; while Lord De Moreland himself was powerfully, though internally, affected; for he knew there was a chance against the happiness of his child, although he hoped, and firmly hoped, every thing auspicious for it.

But nearly had all these hopes and every particle of firmness been subdued; and nearly had his lordship himself forbidden the proceeding of the marriage ceremony; when Mellifont, with solemn impressiveness, charged them both, "as they should answer at the dreadful day of judgment, if there existed any impediment to their union, to confess it;" and that Montagu started with a look of direful, of pitiable dismay, and became paler than the marble beneath the altar, while the cold dew of subduing agitation gushed from his temples, and trembled on his forehead: but only for one instant did Bouverie seem surprised into a recollection of his ardent passion for another;

for in the next his bloom returned, and he looked serenely firm.

This awful ceremony ended, and the vestry business being arranged, the noble fees all presented, the wedding party proceeded to their respective carriages, and then on to the Priory, through a lane of men, women, and children, assembled from Seaview, and all the adjacent parishes, to strew the way with spring flowers, and who now rent the air with aspirations for every blessing to attend the wedded life of Miss Bouverie, who had been, on some occasion of their lives, their friend, their benefactress, their consoler in trouble or in sickness.

A most sumptuous and elegant *déjeûné* awaited the return of the nuptial party at the Priory; the only part of which the poor bride could partake was of some tea; for her head ached excessively, she felt so languid she could scarcely speak, and pronounced from her feelings altogether the agitation of being married a very sickening thing.

Breakfast ended, Lord De Moreland

reminding the bride of how far she had to travel that day, she no longer delayed her change of dress; and when the carriages drove up to convey her and her little suite away, her tears could not brook restraint; and, weeping on the bosom of Rosalind her adieu, she compared a wedding to the rose Mrs. Falkland wore; though possessed of attractive sweets, yet mingled still with thorns.

"My husband is the sweet flower to me," she said; "but the thorns are the pangs I endure on quitting the protection that sheltered my infant helplessness; the friends of my riper years: but, believe me, not all the goodness, the tenderness of him whom I have thus quitted you for, shall ever make me cease to remember my love and gratitude to you and my dear guardian."

Adelaide now rapidly took leave of all her friends; and her uncle giving her a hasty, yet tender embrace, and his most impressive benediction, cheerfully added—

"But no tears are to be shed between us now, my love! since, after a few days

passed in transacting necessary business, I shall visit you in your cottage, to see what kind of *maîtresse d'hôtel* you make; and then our sorrowful adieus must come ere I depart for Spain."

The trembling, listless Adelaide, was now led to their handsome travelling carriage by her husband, in which four post horses whirled them off most fleetly from Mordaunt Priory.

Lord De Moreland, to spare his beloved adopted children the pang of a long adieu, deceived them relative to his intentions; for, in about an hour after their departure, he, with his faithful Baronello, set out for Spain; and on the following day Mrs. Falkland, with her children, her mother, and their necessary attendants, commenced their projected tour in search of the banished health and peace of the self-afflicted Rosalind.

It was late in the day when the bride and bridegroom arrived at a beautiful villa belonging to Lord De Moreland, on the banks of the Thames, near Twickenham; but every thing was prepared with elegance

and comfort for their reception by the housekeeper, who had lived many years in the family.

A most elegant dinner, on a small scale, was served shortly after their arrival; when Montagu, with gallant grace, led his lovely young wife to take her place, for the first time, as mistress of his table; and she commenced the task with such blushing sweetness, and went through it with such timid, winning fascination, that Montagu felt enchanted; yet not so completely out of his senses as not to perceive further confirmation to fears awakened on the road, of his wife's not being well; and, as soon as they adjourned to the drawing-room, he implored her to allow him to send for medical advice with such affecting tenderness of alarm, that Adelaide, not enduring to distress him, assured him, from what she strove to adopt as her own belief, that all was the effect of agitation and sleepless nights of meditation upon the awful event of that morning.

Montagu fervently hoped it was so; but, not quite convinced, he sought a private conference with Obearn, and Mrs. Ash (the

housekeeper), to reveal his fears to the one, and learn from the other if there was any medical man of eminence in the neighbourhood; when he had the satisfaction to learn from the former, " that she trusted her adored child's belief was just; since, from the susceptibility of her feelings, any powerful anxiety of mind affected her voice and aspect like indisposition;" and, from the latter, " that Richmond had to boast an Æsculapius, high in the records of well-earned renown."

But although no determinate indisposition had appeared by the morrow, still the lassitude of Adelaide's frame, her heavy eyes, and headach, continued; though still she assured her anxiously attentive husband, "that they were not increased since the preceding day:" but soon her headach powerfully augmented, when the post arrived with farewell letters from her kind and affectionate uncle to his adopted children. Bitterly she wept; and, in anticipating sorrow, expressed her alarm at every danger he had so lately escaped from, being renewed; and it required all the tender address of Montagu to lull appre-

hensions that he himself most afflictingly cherished.

But these symptoms, which hung about our poor heroine, at length burst forth into alarming certainty; and, at early dawn the following morning, the almost distracted Montagu aroused Obearn, whom terror almost deprived of senses, when she found the adored child of her care so seriously ill, that the Richmond Æsculapius was instantly summoned by the heart-anguished Bouverie.

Mr. Dee, after examining the pulse of his patient, and asking every requisite question, demanded from Obearn "if Mrs. Bouverie had ever had the small-pox?"

"She was innoculated when a baby, sir."

"And had it decidedly?"

"Decidedly, sir."

"Were you with her at the time?"

"No, sir: I was with a dying sister in the country, when my dear mistress, alarmed by the prevalence of the complaint around her, had the dear babe innoculated. No pustules arising, my mistress was uneasy, and called in two or three surgeons

of eminence, beside the one who attended the child, who gave it as their opinion that all was safe, from the appearance of the arm. This opinion satisfied my dear master and mistress, and also my beloved young lady's guardian too, an eminent physician, who examined and cross-examined me a thousand times upon the subject; and who, finding Miss Bouverie escaped infection, where she once unexpectedly encountered it, became perfectly easy about it."

"But these appear, to an almost absolute certainty, the sickening symptoms of the small-pox. Recollect, has Mrs. Bouverie been, within these few days, where it was possible infection might assail her?"

Obearn, with new terrors awakened, remembered, that in a round of farewell beneficence to her pensioners, Adelaide, a day or two previous to her marriage, had taken her bounty to a family where the children were in the height of the small-pox; and, although of a most favourable kind, she entered no cottage after until she had hastened home to change her dress, lest she *should* spread contagion.

The opinion of Mr. Dee was verified; Adelaide came out gradually in the pustules of this terrible malady; and though extremely full, it was of the distinct and most favourable kind; so that, although direfully disfigured for the time, no danger was apprehended of the loss of her beauty, or any fatal consequence.

During this deforming malady, nothing could exceed the tender unremitting attention which the heart-rived Montagu paid to his gentle wife; sharing with Obearn in every toil, even in sitting up at night: and when the sacrifice of rest was no longer requisite, he had a small bed put up in her room for himself to occupy; not enduring to trust her even to the care of her faithful Norah.

For hours each day Montagu now walked the house with Adelaide, although every window was open; and a keen March wind rendering such a promenade most uninviting; or played at chess with her; or read to her: in short, devoting his whole time to serving her; for now he felt as if his existence rested upon hers: for even under all the *obvious disad*vantages of her deforming

malady, Adelaide had fascinated him to such excess by the fortitude she evinced when first informed of the loathsome disease she was attacked with;—by her piety, her meekness, her patience, her affecting effusions of gratitude to him; that by the time the disorder had arrived at its height, and after twelve days' unremitting attendance upon her, Montagu firmly believed that Adelaide had now completely triumphed over her potent rival; and with exulting joy he congratulated himself upon his prowess in determination, having secured to the angelic wife of his choice the undisputed empire of his heart she so fully merited.

Poor Adelaide, during this time of mortifying suffering, found her affection for her tender husband hourly augmenting, on the basis of the most susceptible gratitude, to an excess she thought her heart could never glow with; yet his absence became the earnest wish of her bosom from the moment she first beheld her temporary direful disfiguration; for to be looked on with the eye of disgust by Montagu, was an idea *too painful* to be endured; and to prevent

the realizing of this dreaded horror, she went closely veiled all day, and her hands constantly covered; and no inducement could prevail upon her to take her meals with him: but still she was aware he must obtain glimpses of her swelled and studded face, sufficient to occasion the calamity she shrunk from; but all her efforts to send him from her proved ineffectual, until, after the crisis was past, the fearful moment of the secondary fever,—then he left her for a morning, and went to town; from whence he returned full of new gratitude to Lord De Moreland, by whose powerful interest his exchange from General Harley's regiment, and promotion to the second lieutenant-colonelcy in the ——. hussars, had been so speedily effected, for that very day his promotion had been gazetted; and the only alloy he felt to the pleasure of this intelligence, lay in the pain he knew it would inflict in the pity-teeming bosom of his Adelaide, to find his exchange was into the identical regiment in which the Duke of St. Kilda held a troop.

"You will join immediately," said Adelaide eagerly, as soon as she had learned his promotion; "for I hope there exists a necessity for it: but I hope I may be excused from my duty of joining you, until I cease to prove such a libel on your taste."

"But as the officers of my new regiment have seen my wife in the full blaze of her transcendent loveliness, I cannot fear their *critique* upon my taste; therefore, when I go, I move not without my most precious self. But Adelaide, my love," he continued, "I have been a miserable scrub to you since you became my wife."

"A scrub! Montagu."

"Yes, my Adelaide; for I have had no opportunity of making you any little offering: but you are so perfectly the sovereign of diamonds; for, like Sindbad the sailor, lofty towering eagles have collected such stores of gems for you from those rich valleys, such a grovelling mortal as I am can never soar to find access to that—

"Montagu," said Adelaide, with tender impressiveness, "you gave me, in your

heart, a ruby above price.—In that my every wish is centred; I ask, I seek no more."

Bouverie, with rapture, caught her in his arms, to press her to his grateful bosom; but Adelaide promptly eluded his grasp, exclaiming—

"Oh! you forget what I am."

"No, Adelaide, no," he replied; "what you are can never be forgotten by me, whilst power is mine to appreciate surpassing excellence: but, my too sensitive Adelaide, I have brought you something which Mrs. Falkland thought you would like as well as diamonds; and was so very good to write and bespeak for me."

Montagu now presented her with an entire dress of the most exquisitely beautiful and costly point lace.

Adelaide in rapturous gratitude kissed the gift, though she would not the donor.

"Oh!" exclaimed Bouverie, "how this odious veil deprives me of the rapture of contemplating that speaking countenance in all the eloquence of its enchanting animation!"

"Oh!" said Adelaide, "there is some-

thing better for your contemplation now; since here comes Dennis to summon you to your dinner. Adieu! and a good appetite to you, that you may devour sufficient to prevent my being offended; for on your festive board this day is now exhibited my very first essay at ordering a dinner for my *caro sposo.*"

"Ah! my Adelaide; and yet you will not partake of it with me."

"In about another week," she playfully replied, "I may sum up a sufficient portion of courage to behold the dinners I attempt to order."

Bouverie's business at his agent's, with some he had undertaken to execute for Lord De Moreland, took him several days, most reluctantly, to town, and never did he return but on the expanded wings of impatience to get back to his fascinating wife: never did he return without some elegant token of his remembrance of her during absence: but they were so expensive, that although they proved sweet incense to the fondly attached heart of Adelaide, she yet entreated him to desist, since she required no further testimonials

of his affection; but if sometimes he felt a resistless impulse to bring her some flattering proof of remembrance, to allow it to be some book which he might wish her to study; a drawing to copy; or some pretty song that pleased him; which she might learn to sing against she found courage to let him hear her.

## CHAPTER IV.

But at length, one unfortunate day, when Bouverie was firm in his conviction, that Lady Marian Harley was only remembered by him as a vision of distempered fancy, he went up to town; and calling at his army agent's, to learn something relative to a new position of quarters for his regiment; a packet (not long since delivered by a porter at the office) was put by one of the clerks into his hands, directed to the Earl of De Moreland, to their care; and, from his short lived assumption of that title, there was no doubt of its being intended for Colonel Bouverie.

The superscription of this packet was too intimately known to Montagu, to admit of one hesitating doubt as to the hand that wrote it; and with a death-like sickness pervading his whole frame, he took it; and only by the utmost exertion of his fortitude could he prevent his overpowering feelings from betraying themselves to those around him.—Like lightning he darted out

of the office,—rushed through the court, —and bounding into a hackney coach, ordered the charioteer to drive at full speed to Berkley Square; possessing still sufficient command over himself not to break open the packet in the coach, lest his emotions might subdue his faculties,—and leave the packet open for the inspection of those who might find him deprived of his senses.

In a very few moments he arrived at Lord De Moreland's house, where making his rapid way to the library, he closed himself in; and, after calling up every particle of firmness he could command, to sustain him whilst he should inspect a packet directed in the hand of Marian, he opened it, and discovered it to contain a letter, and a red leathern case. Well knowing this case, he instantly burst it open; and beheld, what he expected, an exquisitely beautiful picture of Lady Marian, in her eighteenth year, drawn as a houri. The resemblance was still striking; and in the eyes, and smile, beamed all of fascination that moosulmauns would covet in these promised wives; a portrait, which Bouverie

had often implored possession of, but in vain.

A view of this too alluring resemblance, now made his heart almost to flutter from its seat; and although his lips throbbed to bid this long-coveted idol an impassioned welcome, he had yet a monitor within; which told him, " that in the husband of Adelaide such greeting would be a crime;" and gifted him with resolution to close the case; and, recoiling from its dangerous contact, to lay it on a table.

" But the letter!—yes, the letter!—Must he not peruse that? Would that, too, prove a crime against Heaven and Adelaide? Might it not contain something which he ought to know? Might, oh! might it not prove a posthumous letter?—for Lady Marian might be no more; and her portrait, alas! alas! a legacy; for, whilst it was a crime to yield it to him, her stoical virtue had refused it?"

And now the direfully agitated Bouverie, with a heart almost bursting, in the agony of anticipating anguish, severed the seal, and promptly found this epistle, widely different from a posthumous address; since

whatever could be found in language impassioned, this letter contained; which first began with congratulations upon his accession to his title; "which the superscription to letters," she said, "which arrived for him after his departure, had informed all Malta of, long before it reached her ears, for she was confined to her bed; her life despaired of; in consequence of his having obeyed the dictates of her ruthless virtue; and from that direful illness, and the anguish of her breaking heart, firmly convincing her she could not long sustain existence, unless she beheld him daily, in the innocent indulgence of their mutual Platonic adoration, she could no longer delay writing, to assure him she only lived for him; and that it was possible, nay probable, even yet, in heaven-robed innocence, she might give herself to the most godlike amongst men; since the General had had an alarming apoplectic fit; and the surgeons had declared, if he continued his libations to Bacchus, he must inevitably have a fatal relapse: but those libations there existed no hope of his ever now relinquishing;—that in consequence of this alarming at-

tack, she had persuaded him to give up all thoughts of India; that, as his successor at Malta was arrived, they had nothing to detain them from their native land, but to wait for the sailing of the Circe frigate, which was to convey them home; but as every moment was an anguished one to her, until she addressed a revocation of all her cruelty to him; she gladly seized the opportunity of a safe hand, about immediately to embark, to write to him in all the fondness of her adoring heart, to entreat he would make no delay, the moment he received her letter, to fly from whatever part of England he might be in, to London; to be ready there, on the arrival of the Circe in the Downs, to bless her aching sight, and give transport to her idolizing heart."

We feel it utterly impossible for us to give our readers any adequate idea of the direful effect this letter had upon Montagu; who writhed, who groaned, in mental anguish; execrating his own impetuosity, nay the impetuosity of Lord De Moreland, for thus rending the heart, the *unalienably* attached heart, of Lady Ma-

rian, by his inauspicious marriage; making him for ever wretched; and erasing happiness from the tablet of the early life of Adelaide.

At the name of Adelaide, Montagu wept as bitter tears as ever fell from the humid eyes of sorrowing man; and at length hour after hour passed on in this riving anguish of tortured feeling; until, almost subdued by despair, he found himself unequal to the direful conflict of appearing before his wife without betraying to her accurate observation, her attentive tenderness, the misery, which seemed to threaten fast the annihilation of his senses.—The time was drawing near, in which his poor deceived angelic Adelaide would expect him; and no, he could not, would not, inflict upon her gentle heart one voluntary pang.

What then was to be done? He could not appear before his wife in his present agitation: he could not remain, in that betraying state either, in the house of her uncle; and, after a few moments' commune with his almost phrensied thoughts, he determined to take up his abode, for the next eighteen hours, at some hotel, and from

thence to despatch an express, to inform Adelaide, " that unavoidable regimental business detained him in town that night; but that he would be with her about noon the subsequent day."

The almost maniac Bouverie now fled from Lord De Moreland's house, to an hotel in Albemarle Street, where, after several inutile attempts, he at length succeeded in effecting the steady characters, that would not alarm her for whom his heart shed its drops of anguished sympathy.

The *maître d'hôtel* took care that Colonel Bouverie should not forget to order a dinner; but, when it appeared, the heart rived Montagu could only lessen it by swallowing a few spoonfuls of soup: but soon aware even that small portion of refreshment seemed to renovate his drooping existence, he determined at once to commit an unusual excess, for him; and accordingly he drank nearly a pint of Madeira, which braced his nerves sufficiently to enable him at length, although with difficulty he accomplished it, to collect his faculties for the power of steadily thinking; and, after five hours' pacing unremittingly the

extensive apartments he was in, this long and agonizing rumination terminated in favour of religion and honour, and gratitude to Lord De Moreland; and in a firm determination to sacrifice every thing to secure the peace of the innocent and lovely being he had sedulously wooed into the most tender affection for him, his inestimable Adelaide, his gentle wife; and as the evening was passed in toiling for this resolution, the night was spent in the as difficult task of carrying it into effect; and not until the sun was even visible in the streets of London, had Montagu finished the heart-riving effort, of revealing his marriage to Lady Marian, and bidding her a tender, yet a firm adieu.

The heart of Bouverie felt less oppressed when this epistle was ended, and formed, with the portrait, into a packet; for it was disburdened of the direful fear of being fascinated into error; and now he laid himself down, to recruit his wearied frame, not to appear before Adelaide with an aspect so suspiciously changed: and when he arose, and was dressed in some clean linen, which he procured from the *maître d'hôtel*, and

had endeavoured to take some breakfast, he proceeded to General Harley's, in Hill Street; where the porter informed him, the house was in great commotion, preparing for the momentarily expected return of the family from Malta; as information had been received at the Admiralty, by telegraph, two days before, of the Circe frigate having entered Torbay.

The emotion of Bouverie now became so tremendous, that with the utmost difficulty he could command articulation necessary for to charge the packet he left might be safely delivered into Lady Marian's woman's hands, for her lady; and then, on the wings of terror, he flew back to the hotel, and ordered his curricle instantly to the door; when his horses, for the first time, felt the whip from his hand, through his impatience to escape out of London, lest Lady Marian should come by telegraph too, ere he left it; and fully determined to persuade Adelaide to accompany him to his regiment, which was now on its march from Kent into Sussex; the head-quarters Bexhill Barracks.

Like an individual flitting from danger

to protection, Bouverie flew into the arms of his wife; who, on her part, was so enraptured at seeing him a full hour before she expected, that joy operated like the most powerful cordial, exhilarating her spirits to a degree of fascinating animation, that Montagu had never witnessed since his return from abroad; and her conversation, which through this whole morning never lost its vivacity, was so playfully whimsical, yet so rationally captivating, that the inthralled Bouverie, in despite of the witchery of Lady Marian's semblance and epistle, could think little of any thing but Adelaide, whilst Adelaide was thus enchanting.

But, alas! our poor heroine's strength was not sufficiently restored, after her late malady, to allow her playful spirits to continue in unsubdued animation through the whole of the day; and, as evening advanced, they began to flag, from bodily languor; and as they drooped, so did Montagu; and at intervals to take horrorized snatches of thought upon what dire effect his inhuman, though inevitable letter to Lady Marian, might possibly have upon

her devotedly attached, her ardent heart. At length these snatches became more frequent; and, at last, to attract the attention of Adelaide; when instantly she beheld every thing in his aspect to awaken in her susceptible heart an agony of alarm; and, in a tone of the most affecting tenderness of solicitude, she exclaimed—

"My Montagu! my husband! you are ill. You have caught this obnoxious malady from me. Oh! why, why was I deceived into a belief that you had had it?" and Adelaide now burst into an agony of tears.

Bouverie caught her tenderly in his arms, and laid her head upon his agitated bosom; while, by the most positive assurances of his having had the small-pox, soothed her alarm about that malady, and by as positive assurances that it was a restless night, devoted to forcibly awakened sympathy for the blighted happiness of a very dear friend, that gave his aspect the appearance of illness, only could he allay her apprehensions of approaching serious indisposition.

"Thank Heaven!" said Adelaide, in the

sweetest tones of melting tenderness, "that you are not ill. Any indisposition of yours would make me very unhappy, Montagu; but was I to prove the cause of my evil to you, then indeed I should be wretched."

The whole frame of Montagu now vibrated with emotion at this sentence, uttered in accents which thrilled to his heart; when Adelaide, from resting in his arms, felt this vibration; and in eager scrutiny of his countenance, to read if he was deceiving her relative to his health, forgot her own mortification in the exposure, and raised her veil, that nothing might impede her anxious investigation; when the spontaneous start and blush of pained surprise of Bouverie, on beholding her so disfigured, which was well understood by her, saved him from detection of more than a restless night having stamped his countenance with the aspect it then wore.

"Ah! Montagu," said Adelaide, in a tremulous voice, "it is a painful thing to be recoiled from by those we love; but I can find fortitude to sustain even that, while you are well. But come, let us think of

pleasanter themes. Let us play at chess, and see if it is ever to be my fate to conquer."

"Doubt it not, my Adelaide," said Bouverie impressively; and after their game had ended, that they had partaken of some light viands, and that Adelaide arose to retire, Montagu's *bon soir* was an embrace of such tremulous tenderness, that whilst it affected her heart with gratitude, still awakened wonder in her bosom too.

It was considerably beyond his usual time for seeking repose, that Bouverie entered the chamber of his wife, to retire to the bed he had occupied since her illness; and with the most wary caution he made his entrance, not to disturb her, whom he flattered himself was long since buried in the tranquil sleep of innocence.

When Adelaide had become so convalescent as to require no watching in the night, she had earnestly importuned her husband to occupy an approximate chamber, and give up his little comfortless bed; but Bouverie had proved obstinate: and this want of acquiescence he now bitterly repented; for his heart was so afflicted, he

despaired of any thing but sleepless nights; and he trembled lest his restlessness should disturb her whose slumbers he knew rested on her senses, light as thistledown on the wings of the gentlest summer breeze; and that if in the conflict his heart endured, a sigh should escape the anguished burden, it might reach the ready ear of the poor deceived, ill-mated Adelaide.

But even more than Montagu apprehended was realized. Adelaide, from having had her rest most completely destroyed the preceding night, by her alarm of some nocturnal conflagration in London assailing the hotel her husband slept in, very shortly sunk to profound repose; and Bouverie, from his studious endeavour not to disturb her, so successfully hushed his rising sighs, and tranquillized his agitated frame, that his mental powers insensibly imbibed a sort of sympathetic calmness; and after first in agonized reflexion ruminating on the direful contrast the face of Adelaide now exhibited to the portrait he had possessed sufficient firmness to return; he sunk, by degrees, into retrospection of all the mental beauties Adelaide had

evinced, since his first knowledge of her, until that hour; when at length fully convinced, if his heart had lost its object of idolatry, he had obtained a wife more likely to guide him and his children to the realms of endless bliss than her he sighed for: and with a mind at length almost lured by his wife's virtues to contentment, "Tired Nature's kind restorer" took compassion on him, and gave to his harassed mind and frame some rest; in which the themes of his waking thoughts presented fancies to his dreams; and, in the painful agitation of his visions, his hitherto most happy wife was suddenly awoke from her slumber, by his vehement articulation of her name.

Adelaide darted out of bed, and with the rapid fleetness of terrorized affection flying to yield assistance to her husband, whom, in agonized alarm, she supposed was ill; and tenderly taking his hand, which lay upon the coverlid, exclaimed—

"Oh! Montagu, my life! what ails you?"

But Montagu's profound sleep was not dissipated by the voice of Adelaide; and her hand only seemed to come to his con-

tact in unison with the fable of his dream; for instantly he pressed her hand, as he emphatically uttered—

"Oh! Adelaide, my deceived wife! weep not thus; since believe me I am striving, with all my mental powers, to change her idol image in my heart for yours."

Our heroine now perceived her husband had called her in his sleep; and although she knew how wild were the wanderings of slumbering fancy, yet what Bouverie had articulated caused a painful sensation to vibrate through her heart; and, in the intuitive impulse of exalted feeling, not wishing to come by secrets thus involuntarily betrayed, she called to Bouverie to awake him: but she could neither succeed in that, or the extrication of her hand; and he continued—

"It was your uncle forbade my telling you my heart was not mine to offer to you, Adelaide; but had she not returned from Malta, and sent me her heavenly portrait to contrast with your direfully changed countenance, I should not be so wretched."

And now Montagu speaking inarticulately, she lost a few unconnected sentences; but at length he loudly exclaimed, as he disdainfully flung her hand from him—

"Then go—go back to your uncle, madam, and leave me to my adoring and adored Marian; whose husband, she says, is dying; and then, and then only for you I might be blessed."

The moment Bouverie flung away the hand of Adelaide, she, almost subdued by the agony of dismay, reeled, and fell upon her own bed; when the last sentence of Montagu struck so terrifically on her appalled senses, it was with difficulty could she command them not to ebulliate in a piercing shriek; while, with a heart of anguish, and an almost phrensied brain, she rushed from this chamber of death to happiness into her adjoining dressing-room; where she closed the door, to shut out further direful sounds from the lips of her sleeping husband; and sunk before a chair, to supplicate Heaven to spare her senses: but, ere that intent could be fulfilled, her heart's agonies sent a briny torrent to her

eyes; and the bitterest drops that ever guiltless mortal shed gushed in impetuous floods from the eyes of Adelaide; nor until morning's dawn did she cease to weep thus piteously this early, unexpected blight to all the sweet and lovely blossoms of her wedded happiness: for, although she knew the wild chimeras of sleeping fancy were not proofs as strong as Holy Writ, yet she was possessed of too many other testimonies of Bouverie's dreams being the offspring of his waking thoughts, to doubt the certainty of her misery.

Her early suspicion at Roscoville, of Montagu's having an inauspicious attachment at Malta, she now with agony remembered: the raptures, too, with which he had portrayed Malta to his correspondents, as an Elysium to him; while from thence recommenced his anxious wishes for her union with his brother: and when with these proofs she combined the direful change in his aspect and spirits on his return from town the preceding day, could there remain a doubt of her being a wretched wife, adoring a husband of whose affection she was fatally bereaved?

rather, "Oh cruel deception! she had never possessed."

Alas! and by whom were these invaluable affections possessed?—By a married woman! and one not likely for her ever to withdraw them: for Adelaide was at no loss to identify the adoring and adored Marian of her husband; since she had heard from Mellifont of Lady Marian Harley, the wife of the colonel of Montagu's late regiment, as the most beautiful and accomplished amongst women. She also knew that Bouverie had been aide-de-camp to General Harley; knew he went out in the same frigate; and could she want a further clew to learn what Marian had undone her?

Was Montagu, then, absolutely betrayed into the trangression of an attachment to the wife of another?—that other's life precarious, and she then probably the only barrier—the obnoxious barrier, to the happiness of her husband?—This was a direful pang to the susceptible feelings of Adelaide: but the agony which it inflicted was feeble, when compared to the anguished *wound*, implanted by the heart-riving, soul-

riving torture, of sullying the name of her husband by the possible imputation of a crime.

Adelaide was as purely innocent as mortal being could be; yét she was not so great a novice in the theory of human frailty, not to tremble for that passion, imbibed for a married woman, which must have met encouragement ere it could have dared to overstep the boundaries of concealment, and had met the assurance of reciprocal adoration; and not in all the pangs which miseries combined could rend a bosom by, ever shot one more direful through a tender heart, than rived poor Adelaide's in the moment that horror opened the page of possibility of Montagu's passion for Lady Marian leading him to a crime; and the throes of her anguished feelings, the convulsive torrent of her misery's tears, became, at the suggestion, almost too mighty to sustain.

The first dawn of morning arrested the tortured thoughts of this hapless young wife from their calamitous themes, to a recollection, that soon she must appear before her husband; and how was she to

effect the possibility of tranquillizing her aspect, to appear before him without betraying the direful discovery she had so innocently made?—" And that, she hoped —she trusted, she never, never would be so weak, so cruel, to betray; since poor Montagu had already full sufficient griefs to oppress him.—Oh! if they were only griefs! that would be comparative happiness: but let his sufferings flow from whatsoever painful source they might, they should not be augmented, by discovering her state of happy ignorance was terminated, and the seal of misery fixed on her mortal life."

But the question of, how her aspect was to be tranquillized? was promptly answered by the piety of her heart; and already on her knees, where she had remained since her first anguished entrance, she, by the powerful exertions of that fortitude Falkland had toiled to gift her trembling spirit with, commanded her distracted thoughts to concentrate before the throne of mercy; and humbly and devoutly to supplicate for firmness, to bear with meekness, and bow to with submission, those miseries which

the unerring wisdom of Heaven might ordain for her: and poor Adelaide soon found how efficacious is the balm distilled from Religion's influence; for her powers to sustain became equal to her burden; and though bereaved of every hope of earthly felicity, she steadily arose from her knees; and though chilled almost to an isicle by grief, and so long an exposure to the night air, without her accustomed clothing, she stole back to her long deserted bed without disturbing Montagu; that no suspicion should be awakened, by her absence from it, of what had so direfully chased her thence, when daylight should come, to discover if it was untenanted.

## CHAPTER V.

Bouverie arose even unusually early; and Adelaide again fortified her firmness for appearing before him, from that source through which she sought her fortitude ere she summoned Obearn to assist in her toilet; and much she congratulated herself upon having so pertinaciously continued to live in a veil since her disfiguration, as it now secured the sorrow of her aspect, and the still visible traces of excessive weeping, from detection.

After delaying to the last possible moment, our hapless heroine at length descended to the breakfast room, where her first meeting with her husband generally took place each day; and where now, at one glance, she read the visible dejection of his aspect; and in the same moment making her morning compliments, the accent in which she uttered them electrified Montagu: its plaintive sweetness seemed in touching thrills to sound to his conscious heart the knell of her departed hap-

piness; when in agonized dismay he flew to her, caught her in his arms, as in tremulous anxiety he exclaimed—

"Oh! Adelaide, my inestimable wife! what mean these mournful tones?—Oh! tell me, are you ill? or—are you, are you unhappy?"

Adelaide shook with tremor; and so did Bouverie. It was some seconds ere she could articulate: but at length, through a powerful exertion for firmness, she answered something more cheerfully, but not one particle less affectingly—

"Be assured I am perfectly well; and believe I am happy: but, after illness, it is not unusual, I imagine, for spirits to vary. Mine are certainly not in their altitude to day; so that much I fear"——here Adelaide paused, for she had been going to say "my Montagu," when, with a direful pang, her heart reminded her, he was not *her* Montagu; and she therefore substituted, but in a saddened accent, "*poor* Montagu, you will find in me a dolorous companion for this day."

"Oh! no, I trust not," he falteringly

said; for he felt strangely affected by her. "Oh! I trust not; since to see you sad would—Oh! it would make me wretched."

Adelaide, terrified at her almost unconquerable tendency to a burst of tears, now struggled with all her energies to answer cheeringly—

"Absolutely, my *caro sposo*, you are become nervous, through your seclusion with your hobgoblin bride: I therefore must entreat, unless you wish to see me sad, that you will change the scene a little by going to Bexhill, where the society of your brother officers will enliven you; the sea breezes do you good; and when you return for me, I trust my poor face may peep from behind its necessary present screen without mortification to myself."

"Excuse me, my Adelaide, if I do not comply with your kind request: if I say, that until the period of cessation to this sad eclipse of your matchless charms, I will not go to Bexhill; for I will not go any where without you: but as you wish a change of scene for me, what say you to an expedition to Windsor for a few days?

The weather is most auspicious; and as you have never been there to view it, it will both amuse and do you good."

Adelaide gratefully acquiesced, in the eagerly clung to hope of her mental disquietude escaping the further observation of her husband, in his employment of exhibiting the lions; and the moment Mr. Dee answered her humanity inspired question, relative to her spreading contagion, that every possibility of infection from her was terminated, she set about her prompt arrangements for this excursion.

To Windsor, therefore, Bouverie and his disfigured bride immediately repaired; and, attended by their necessary suite, took up their abode at the Castle Inn; from whence he soon sallied forth, as *Ciceroni*, to his sorrow stricken wife.

Every thing worthy of attention in Windsor, Bouverie eagerly showed to the grateful Adelaide; and who never before having seen any of the royal family, the effect that first beholding, as her sovereign, a man so sacred in venerable years, whose virtues were as light upon a brilliant, giving a brighter lustre to the gems

of his crown, attended in his devotions, and upon his rides, by his amiable, dutiful, and affectionate daughters, had so sensible an effect upon her loyal heart, as to teach it a transient forgetfulness of the misery that oppressed her.

Adelaide was so deeply versed in history, so well acquainted with the poets of ancient and modern celebrity, knew the style of every artist of fame, the different orders of architecture so perfectly, that she gave but little trouble to her *Ciceroni*; who, enraptured as her mental stores spontaneously betrayed themselves, felt the most powerful surprise how she could, in her yet short-run course, have treasured up so large a fund of information.

After three days spent in viewing the beauties of Windsor, Bouverie took our heroine to Eaton; and there, as they explored the library together, Montagu often found new causes to wonder at the mental acquirements of his wife; and smiling at length in enraptured approbation on her, softly articulated in her ear—

"Oh! Adelaide; and with all this store of knowledge, you continue the most un-

obtrusive child of sweet simplicity; and when the retiring timidity of this your early youth yields to acquired conviction of your own great powers, oh what a companion you will prove!"

The firmness of Adelaide was nearly subjugated by this unexpected view of the soother hope, in the tenderness of this effusion; and trembling with the joy of even a distant ray of possibility of the extinguished lamp of happiness ever being relit for her, Bouverie pressed her hand, and smiling said—

"Thou timid being! Even the effusions of your husband's exulting raptures make you tremble like a blossom fluttered by a breeze; and blush, I warrant me, could we but penetrate this hateful screen, as sweetly, as fascinatingly, as when you consented to be mine."

"Ah!" thought Adelaide, and many a time she thought it afterwards, "what pains poor Montagu takes to teach his heart to love me!"

The fifth morning of their stay at Windsor, Bouverie had dedicated to showing Frogmore to his wife; and when the morn-

ing came, some unexpected obstacles intervened to prevent the accomplishment of that intention, and Montagu was recounting to Adelaide those difficulties which he just had learned, when Lee entered the room with what he thought would prove pleasing intelligence to his master—

"That an *avant coureur* was just arrived to secure apartments for General Harley, who was on his road to Windsor to pay his duty to his Majesty."

"But Lady Marian," added Lee, "does not accompany him."

Even this latter information could not recover Bouverie from the direful shock the name had conveyed to his bosom; and like one bereaved by dismay of every faculty, he stood transfixed, without power to make one comment on the news that Lee had brought him.

The most potent throbs of pity now dilated through the tender bosom of the generous, merciful Adelaide; and led her to turn from her own new infliction of misery's certainty, to instant exertion to relieve the torturing embarrassment of her adored husband; and promptly devising a

message to send Lee from the room, she addressed Bouverie with the voice of difficultly assumed composure—

"Why should you tease yourself, Montagu, to combat with these impediments to our seeing Frogmore? surely we can return here when they exist not; and when I can more comfortably and accurately survey the paintings, than through a thick veil; and unless you wish particularly to stay and see this general, it would oblige me much, dear Montagu, to allow me to escape an introduction to any stranger, until we can avoid the suspicion of your having carried off a nun, by my laying aside the veil."

Bouverie now rang to give orders for their immediate departure, and Adelaide retired to her chamber; where her full heart, new burdened by this further proof of her calamity, in the effect the name of Harley had upon her husband, spontaneously sought relief by tears: but even that sad comfort was soon restrained, by the necessity of summoning Obearn to arrange her small portion of baggage for removal.

As rapidly as the anxiety of Bouverie to

escape an interview with General Harley could arrange it, they returned to Twickenham, where they remained some days, in the same state of distressing conflict with their feelings; each sedulously striving to conceal from the other the grief that oppressed them: but, of the two, Montagu was infinitely the least wretched; since his heart still sheltered hope, the fondly cherished hope of ultimate, unalloyed happiness, conferred even by his union with the wife he had so precipitately chosen.

Amongst many letters which awaited their return from Windsor, was one from Lady Beechbrook, entreating Colonel and Mrs. Bouverie to spend a month at Beechbrook, for change of air, to restore Adelaide's strength, ere herself and lord set out to fulfil their promise to Mrs. Falkland, of joining her upon her tour through Scotland.

Adelaide, shrinking from the idea of Lord and Lady Beechbrook's penetrating eyes of partial anxiety discovering her misery and its source, affected disinclination to accept this kind invitation, from reluctance to appear amongst her old

friends whilst so disfigured; and Bouverie, from apprehension also of Lord and Lady Beechbrook's observations, ere his heart could again break from the renewed spells of Lady Marian, most gladly acceded to her unwillingness, and Adelaide promptly despatched such an excuse as so kind an invitation merited.

In about a week after their return from Windsor, Adelaide and Montagu, attracted by the bright beams of the second moon that had arrived at its meridian of beauty, since their now sadly clouded union; and by the mild breath of evening, in the last week of an uncommonly fine April, to walk upon the lawn, close to the verge of the water; and they were alternately conversing on various interesting themes, or pausing to admire the passing scene of barges, or gayly filled pleasure boats, gliding along the silvery bosom of the Thames: until after a long cessation of those moving objects, Montagu proposed returning to the house, lest any vapour from the water, or night air, might affect the health of Adelaide; and they were just about to bend their course homewards, when their foot-

steps were arrested by the dashing of approaching oars, and at the same moment the sound of a lyre, most exquisitely touched, stole on their delighted ears, like the enchanting notes of magic music; and after a short symphony, given with surpassing effect, a female voice, of transcendent mellifluence, burst forth in a tender strain, inthralling to the senses.

The style of the composition, and the language, were totally unknown to Adelaide. It was an amatory ballad, in modern Greek; but too well understood by Bouverie, whose ravished ear had scarcely drank in one intoxicating tone, when his vanquished heart was subdued at once from the fealty it had toiled to preserve to Adelaide: yet even in this fatal moment of conscious subjugation, panting for the preservation of his innocent, his injured wife's peace, led him, like a maniac, to seize her round the waist, and rush with her on to the house with the wild speed of phrensied apprehension, that one moment's pause within sound of the siren's strains might lead him to betray his feelings.

But the moment his flight into the house

was effected, he recollected some excuse was necessary for the wildness of his proceedings; and now, in faltering accents, finding articulation only from his anguished solicitude to spare the peace of Adelaide, he strove to account for his strange action, by his fearing, " If they paused one moment to take in such magic sounds, they would be lured on to remain to listen some lapse of time fatal to Adelaide."

Adelaide comprehended all; and with a throe of deadly anguish to her heart, came the conviction, that Montagu had listened for a lapse of time, fatal, most fatal, to Adelaide: but yet this magnanimous young woman, anxious to spare the husband she adored, yet honoured; and sensibly pitied, the painful humiliation of uttering falsehoods, to kindly turn suspicion from her mind; generously called up every strengthening power of her firmness, to aid her in convincing him he had succeeded; and soon in accents almost mirthful, she told him " She was sure it was superstitious apprehensions imbibed from Mrs. Rowe's letters, which he had been reading to her that morning, which had influenced his flight,

through a belief, the enchanting minstrelsey they had heard were supernatural sounds, come to lure away the hobgoblin wife, which had been obtruded on him instead of the one he had married."

Adelaide now called for tea, in the hope that during the break, which the process of this beverage would occasion in their now most embarrassing *tête-à-tête*, her husband might a little recover his self-possession:—but that hope was vain: Bouverie, wretched, with every faculty unstrung by the magic of a siren, could not regain the semblance of composure: he had challenged Adelaide to a serious game at chess, ere this dire interruption had been given to their semblance of happiness; and now mechanically he set the table, and invited her to commence.

But the abstracted Bouverie could make no move, consistent with the science of the game; yet his heart-rived wife, in patient misery, made no audible comment upon the absence of his attention; yet the despair of his countenance, the tremour of his hands, the groan-clad sighs that escaped him; were noted in the records of her

wretchedness; but at length, struck by his own betraying distraction, he pleaded a most overpowering headach, when Adelaide urged him to retire.

Bouverie gratefully acquiesced in this proposition, as he panted to be alone, to call back his truant heart, if it yet were possible, to its true loyalty; and Adelaide rang to summon Lee.

"Montagu," she falteringly said, as her anguished heart bled through every pore at any arbitrary impediment existing to withhold her from the performance of her duty towards her suffering husband,—"I summon Lee to attend you; not, believe me, from unwillingness to be, what my heart would lead me to—your tender attendant and nurse myself—but from quiet being the best specific for a headach; and that I have perceived, through this whole evening, your nerves are so unstrung by your close confinement with me, that when, through affection's impulse, I have said any thing kind to you, it has seemed to agitate and too much affect you; and therefore my absence is better for you: but remember, I shall be ready to fly to you at the

summons of your wishes; and promptly, most promptly, Montagu, since the wings of anxiety are fleet ones."

Montagu, too much subdued by her affecting sweetness to trust his voice in articulation, only replied by fervently pressing her to his bosom; and then, with averted face, hurried from her torturing presence.

"Alas! alas!" Adelaide mentally exclaimed, the moment the echo of Bouverie's retreating footsteps no longer reaching her ears, assured her she was securely alone, "what a monster does this direful circumstance compel me to wear the semblance of!—Oh! how unfeeling, how ungrateful, must my husband consider me, after all his tender care of me in my horrid malady, to consign him now to the care of a servant!—Alas! he knows not, that to spare his feelings from the torture of dissembling, whilst in their newly awakened tumult; to save him the pang of receiving the tender attentions of her he deluded into misery, I thus wear the aspect of an ungrateful monster; and, for his sake, thus deprive myself of the fondly coveted chance of winning his straying heart; by

thus wearing the appearance of an unamiable, unfeeling wife."

And now most bitterly, heart-rendingly, poor Adelaide wept, the cruel unexpected deprivation of that affection in which her every hope of earthly happiness now centred, until the striking of a time-piece announced to her the approach of Dennis with a sandwich tray; when, with diligent exertion, she composed her voice to steadiness, not to betray to her servants that she was wretched: but the tray appeared, and disappeared, without her lessening the viands it contained, except by a few sips of water: and the moment it was removed, Lee entered.

Lee announced, that his master's head was considerably better since he had gone to bed; and that feeling inclined to sleep, he had no doubt but on the morrow she would see him quite himself again.

Adelaide thus assured that Montagu wished not to see her ere she retired, now proceeded to her own chamber, from whence she had given orders, when she set out for Windsor, to have her husband's

comfortless bed banished, and another chamber prepared for him, to give his present distracted feelings the comfort of even a temporary undisturbed solitude; a luxury which she had derived great consolation from, while out on her excursion; when, after a whole day of difficultly achieved concealment of her feelings, she, in the sacred sanctuary of her solitary chamber, wept her woes through the night,—prayed for firmness to endure them,—and then prepared her voice and aspect to betray no sorrow against the morning.

Bouverie, as he had anticipated to Adelaide, appeared much more like himself when she met him in the morning, than when he had parted from her the preceding night; and, to her infinite surprise, he clasped her tenderly in his arms the moment he beheld her, and entreated her to accompany him immediately into Wiltshire.

"For I certainly am nervous, my love," he falteringly said; "and I have taken it into my head the air of my native home will prove efficacious to me, and I can

remain there until Sir Charles Longuiville claims my promise of relieving him at quarters."

Adelaide with heart-inspired joy acceded to this unexpected proposition; but soon this animating sunbeam, which seemed to revive the drooping head of expiring hope, was clouded over by a sudden lower. The post arrived, and brought two letters to Bouverie; one from Hastings, the other from London; and the moment he cast his eyes upon the superscription of the letter, the paleness of death overspread his fine countenance; and with a trembling, unstrung hand, he broke open the seal, and as soon as he had read to the end, what he perused with surprise, and not one pleasurable emotion; he started from his seat, and darted into the grounds, where, after walking some time, to regain his composure, he returned to his wondering wife.

"I think in my whole life I never was much more disconcerted," said Bouverie, resuming his seat. "All my structures of comfort, peace, and happiness, I was industriously rearing through my sleepless

hours last night, are threatened with destruction."

"The regiment is ordered for foreign service; and you must leave me, Montagu!" exclaimed Adelaide in the faltering accents of terror.

"No, my love, no: but gratitude to a man who has evinced unbounded friendship for me, will scarcely, I fear, allow me to negative a request, to save him from the disgrace of ignorance; and, in that case, I must give up my auspicious project of an excursion into Wiltshire, and go for a week or two before you into Sussex; and, alas! —but,—

"General Harley, my love,"—at the portentous name poor Adelaide trembled—"General Harley," continued Montagu in an unconquerably hesitating, tremulous tone, "to whom I was aide-de-camp at Malta, ere I got my majority, and to whom I am under infinite obligations, writes to tell me he has just most unexpectedly been appointed to a district; and, —but there, my Adelaide, you can read the letter yourself; and tell me what I can *do, in* possibility, to avoid compliance."—

The terribly agitated Adelaide now read, after the general's congratulations to Bouverie upon his marriage, and an account of his own illness, and his return to England, as follows:—

"But although, dear Bouverie, I congratulate you on the events of your marriage and promotion, I cannot myself; since nothing could have happened more d—lishly unlucky for me; since, without giving me time to breathe, after my voyage from Malta, some of my wife's d—ned officious friends have prevailed upon the commander-in-chief to appoint me to the Hastings' district; and, as ill luck would have it, a confounded mass of military works to inspect. Now, as I know as much of engineering as I do of sailing through the air on a broomstick, I shall be exposed through the army as an ignoramus, and sneered at by every cur in it, if you do not take compassion on me, and accompany me down just for a week or two, and tell me what I must seem to understand; what they expect me to know of fortification; and further to give me a helping hand relative to my staff; which is a broken one at pre-

sent; for, as misfortunes never come singly, I had scarcely done moaning over my new appointment, when news arrived of that confounded troublesome old woman, Cliff's mother, thinking proper, at such a *mal-à-propos* moment, to be at the point of death; and to send off for her son, who set out on the wings of the wind into the Highlands to receive her blessing; whilst, without stirring from my chair, I have given her mine a thousand times, since his departure; for, to answer as his substitute, during his absence, he picked me up a pretty boy from the court of Momus, who came by premature rank through holding his first commission in the guards, and is Captain Thornley, of twenty; who loves laughing and frolic better than the business of an aide-de-camp.—Why, yesterday, when I set him down to send my negative to a few idlers, who applied for a renewal of leave of absence from my regiment at Malta; instead of which, at the same table with me, whilst I was hurrying him to despatch, he demurely made out a most ludicrous round Robbin to me, from *these* youngsters; imploring leave, as long

as their tailors and hotel-keepers would give them credit in London. So you see I cannot expect much sapient aid from him.

"Warren is still my other aide-de-camp; but he is so inexplicable in his explications, that was he to expend his breath, for my information, upon the subject of this new craft of masonry I am ordered to superintend, it would remain as impenetrable a secret to me, as that of the Grand Lodge is to the uninitiated.

"Gayville, too, is still on my staff; but, though an excellent brigade-major, he has not the happy knack of enforcing my comprehension, like you and Cliff; and beside, like myself, being of a confounded nervous habit, he is fit for nothing of a morning, but a field-day, or a sham-battle, or so forth: whilst in an evening, when we are braced by a few bottles; why, then we feel equal to settling the affairs of the nation; which is so d—lish provoking! such a confounded waste of talent! for then we have no business in our own department to settle, when we could do it like heroes and statesmen.

"And now, my dear Bouverie, I en-

treat, I implore you, to take pity on me; and come up to town to-morrow to breakfast, and accompany me to Sussex for one short fortnight, or I shall be disgraced for ever: and for your dear little godson, Montagu's sake, do not let me be ruined, as a military man, ere I have made some fortune for him, poor infant.

"My dear Marian, I am sorry to tell you, was so overpowered by a shock she received the day we arrived in town, relative to a dear friend, whom it is feared is dying—that I have been forced to spare her to go and take leave of that friend, at Blackheath; but I expect her home to-night; so you will have the pleasure of seeing her to-morrow at breakfast: but she does not accompany me into Sussex; nor follow me thither, until this dear friend is no more."

"Adieu! Come to me, I implore you; and save the military fame of

"Yours eternally,

"FRANCIS HARLEY."

"As Cliff determined to take as many medical doctors as would go with him

from Edinburgh, to consult about his mother, no doubt but her speedy exit will be soon effected; and Cliff promptly back, to prevent your protracted absence from your fair spouse."

## CHAPTER VI.

WHILE Adelaide was reading the general's letter, Bouverie perused the one from Hastings; and the moment she had finished what conveyed new alarms to her heart, he exclaimed—

"Alas! Adelaide, this letter decides for me; I cannot evade obliging General Harley, since to Sussex I must go forthwith.—Lady Longuiville begins to awaken alarms for the prudence of her delaying longer her removal to the house of her mother in town, where her accouchement is to take place: this letter is from Sir Charles, claiming my promise of relieving him as soon as he found it necessary to summon me to quarters.

"This letter," he continued, "must have drawn me to Bexhill immediately: but with widely different feelings should I have gone, even though you still shrunk from accompanying me until you were more yourself again; for I should have lived in quiet even until you joined me; and then,

left unmolested to your society, to the hourly increasing fascinations of your society, I should have been happy: but now my peace will be invaded—"

Bouverie paused; he blushed; he feared he had betrayed too much; and, hesitatingly, he continued—

"You must wonder, my Adelaide, why I feel so much annoyed at General Harley's request, when I own myself under obligations to him: but—but he is a *bon-vivant*, and his table is too often surrounded by the intemperate: and now I am a husband, the husband of my inestimable Adelaide, his house is the last I wish to enter; the one I ought most to wish to shun."

The last cadence of Montagu was almost lost in emotion; and he appeared so overpowered by his feelings, that with the utmost difficulty could Adelaide preserve her firmness.

After a painful pause, Bouverie said, in visible agitation, "Adelaide, I cannot go to London to morrow to—to travel with General Harley:—no—not for worlds would I go to—travel with him, to have Bacchanalian revels every night. Will

then your gentle nature, my own sweet Adelaide, forgive my leaving you one day earlier than necessity requires, that I may avoid the infliction of this—this unpleasantness, and yet escape offending the general? For if I set off to day, I can write to him to say, 'I was compelled to go a day before him, in consequence of a letter from Sir Charles Longuiville.'"

All arrangements were now promptly put in train for the immediate departure of Bouverie; and Adelaide lent her assistance, and devised every thing for the comfort of her husband on his journey, although her heart was bleeding with the direful wound inflicted by the terrible conviction, that Montagu was going from her to meet the final annihilation of their wedded happiness.

The same direful presaging sentiments seemed to have taken possession of the mind of the reluctantly departing Bouverie himself; but it was in the moments prior to his departure, that these anticipating apprehensions seemed to press most heavily on the feelings of Bouverie, and almost wholly to deprive him of the power

to say adieu to the interesting being he feared, in horrid apprehension, he had drawn into endless misery; and so often he attempted his farewell, and so often relinquished it, that the nearly subdued wife, presaging utter dereliction, in despair articulated—

"But will you not write to me?—sometimes write to me, Montagu?"

"Write to you!—*Sometimes* write to you, my wife! my Adelaide? What mean you? What could have inspired the question? and what have caused its utterance in such a tone?"

"Oh Montagu!" she plaintively replied, "this is my first separation from a husband; and can you—can you wonder if I act and speak like one bereaved of senses?"

Bouverie pressed her to his bosom with energy; and too much affected to speak, he in a moment after fled into the grounds; where, taking several agitated turns, whilst he acquired firmness to tear himself away, he at length rushed back into the room to Adelaide, like one who had summoned up a sort of desperate resolution that would bear them through a self-performed launch

into eternity, and caught her in his arms: but there again this difficultly acquired resolution seemed to fail him, for he clung, and still coveted to cling, to Adelaide, as the prop on which his every hope of happiness, present and future, hung: and when at length the swiftly passing time did compel him to tear himself away, he felt, in the anguished moment he did relinquish his grasp of Adelaide, as if indeed that prop was wrested from him, and that his happiness was now consigned to the ocean of destruction, without a rudder or a pilot.

For several moments after the departure of her husband, Adelaide stood in the spot he had left her in, transfixed by despair: but at length she sunk upon a couch, and tears arose in torrents; as anguished tears as ever conviction of blighted happiness had taught to flow.

When the hour arrived, our heart-rived heroine was summoned to her dinner; but the place of Bouverie was a desolate void; and her dinner was removed, at length, untouched by her. She had thrown off her veil soon after the departure of her husband; for, since he was gone, she cared

not who beheld her altered face; so that Dennis saw all the grief her countenance portrayed; and in tears this faithfully attached domestic took the untasted viands all from before " the *darlingt* child he helped to rear."

From the report of Dennis, Obearn flew to her beloved child, to importune her to take some nourishment; but Adelaide was sick at heart, and could not eat; and, throwing her arms around her nurse's neck, unrestrainedly wept upon her sympathizing bosom; and meekly bore all her sensible and affection inspired lecture upon her reprehensible weakness in grieving to such a direful excess for the mere temporary absence of her husband, without betraying to this fondly loved, fostering mother, that the griefs were deep and direful for which she mourned.

The affliction of poor Adelaide knew no diminution through that night or the following day; but the succeeding morning brought her a welcome balm in a letter from Montagu, written at Tunbridge; tenderly breathing forth all those regrets at separation he had so manifested at the

moment of his departure; and importuning her, as she prized his peace, to take care of her health.

Another letter from Montagu, by the next day's post, arrived from Bexhill, in the same style of *tendresse*, saying he should lose no time in manœuvring to get off from General Harley, and to obtain leave of absence as well as Sir Charles Longuiville, as both majors were with the regiment; when he would fly with her to De Moreland Castle, for the benefit of warm sea-bathing, at her little less than native place, Seaview.

"Ah!" said Adelaide, with an anticipating groan from her heart, "will these sweet, these kind, these tender letters, come thus affectingly sweet, and kind, and tender, daily thus to his merely esteemed wife, after he has seen this persevering Lady Marian? whom, I cannot doubt, made no delay in following this devoted victim to her charms or wiles the moment she learned he was gone to Sussex; since she will attempt every thing for the seduction of my infatuated husband from his duty to Heaven, and his faith to me; since

she scruples not to enter the mazes of direful deception, affecting to her husband that she was amiably visiting a dying friend at Blackheath, whilst she was in fact at Twickenham, exercising her wiles to draw her captive from his connubial fealty."

At length the piety of Adelaide began to assume its full empire, by tranquillizing into calmer grief the sorrows of her heart; and as it thus receded from the surface to the centre of her heart, the voice of reason began to be heard, and impressively to unfold to the mind of the poor mourner, how injudicious it would prove her sacrificing her looks, her health, to a calamity that was not perhaps irremediable, since the affections of the human breast were often fickle; and Montagu's heart was too much attached to virtue, piety, and all that was estimable, long to remain the inthralled slave of a passion for a woman, who in some unguarded moment might raise the veil which now so artfully concealed every human imperfection from his clouded vision.

And now in many an hour's converse

with piety and reason, Adelaide learned submissive fortitude from the one; and, from the other, determination still to look forward to the heart of her husband, as a rich prize which might become some day her own; and although she must tremble for the chances against the realizing her cherished hope, still to do her utmost for the preservation of her health and looks, as two essential aids to her fond expectation, of winning in time his affection from her rival; and tremblingly alive to the dismaying recollection of the effect this rival's melodious vocal strains had upon her fascinated husband, it now became the panting wish of her anxiety to vie with Lady Marian even in the transcendent super-excellence of that enchanting accomplishment in which she so eminently excelled; and well remembering, too, Bouverie's solicitude for the improvement of her voice, by the instructions of the celebrated Signore Philomelli, she with rapture learned that he had taken a house in Twickenham, for the recovery of his wife's health, and was come down to it.

Poor Adelaide lost not one moment in

her application to the signore, to know if he would take her for a pupil, who promptly acquiesced; and from the moment her timidity allowed him to hear the full tones of her voice, determined that no exertions on his part should be wanting to continue her his pupil; since by her perfection he doubted not to raise his fame even yet higher than it had soared already.

Three lessons each week Signore Philomelli advised Mrs. Bouverie to take, since hers was a voice that well merited every embellishment; and having obtained from Nature every thing to form an accomplished singer, and having learned from Rosalind, who had been a pupil of Philomelli's while in Italy, she had no defects to be corrected; nothing her master wished her to forget: therefore, the improvement derived from every lesson promptly evinced itself, as her courage imperceptibly augmented; since, to effect this necessary increase of courage, he begged leave to bring his wife, a lady of great science in music, to practise with her sometimes of an evening.

Adelaide gratefully acceded to this pro-

position of Signore Philomelli's, as soon as she learned from Mr. Dee that the signora was a woman of unblemished reputation, gladly admitted into the most correct circles: and from this period she had, in addition to her regular lessons, the improvement of the practice of two evenings at least every week, with Signore and Signora Philomelli, who delighted in their visits to her; and the effect both upon voice and courage soon was evident.

Adelaide had augured but too prophetically, that Lady Marian would soon be the retracer of Bouverie's journey into Sussex; for, the very day after the general's arrival there, her ladyship appeared most unexpectedly. Bouverie's seeing her became now inevitable. A first interview took place, and, as managed by her, without a witness, when every magic spell she possessed was called into requisition, to fascinate back the heart of the long infatuated Bouverie. She succeeded but too well; all he had so painfully anticipated was realized. Gradually the virtues, the charms of Adelaide, faded into forgetfulness; or only, perhaps, floated in his me-

mory the last disgusting view he had had of her face, to contrast it with the dazzling beauty of Lady Marian; and even at times, in the delirium of his infatuating passion, he forgot the sacred tie that bound him to our heroine; and that thus in this wild dream of Platonic adoration, he was assassinating the peace, if not the life, of the young, the innocent, the lovely unsuspecting being, who had given him her unsophisticated heart, and intrusted her happiness to his care.

As the renovated power of this enchantress increased, Bouverie's letters to his wife became less punctual, and visibly less affectionate, until they grew almost frigid; and these now tardy letters there was constantly a postscript to, announcing there was yet no house to be found for her accommodation.

The heart-rived Adelaide saw and felt this direful change most sensibly; but she allowed it not to operate upon her conduct; she still continued to write to Montagu as to a husband who yet was interested for her; never reverting to his chilling coldness, or to the long intervals

between his letters. To expressing affection she now sedulously avoided; fearing that might disgust him who no longer prized her attachment to him: but even though, from the seclusion she lived in, knowing little of passing events to enliven her letters by; yet, from the happy talent she possessed, they were never vapid; and always revived a transient glow of interest in the bosom of Bouverie. As in one of his early letters, soon after the arrival of Lady Marian at her husband's district, Bouverie informed her, "Lady Marian Harley had kindly volunteered to make application to Signore Philomelli to give her instructions in singing; but, although her ladyship's interest with him was powerful, she had been unsuccessful, from the impossibility of his undertaking more pupils."—And Adelaide learning from the Signore that such an application had never been made to him, she determined to make no communication of her being then benefiting by those very instructions, lest that meanness which had actuated her rival to affirm an untruth, might lead to some artful device for influencing Montagu to deprive

ıer of this valuable instruction, upon some ›lausible pretence.

At length, in about six weeks after Bourerie's expedition into Sussex, he wrote the nost frigid letter to Adelaide he had ever ›enned to her, actuated by the influence ›f Lady Marian, who artfully threw discredit upon the intelligence which Adeaide had joyfully conveyed to her ıusband, of her disfiguration being now ıappily terminated, by many documents ›f her own and satellite Mrs. Gayville's knowledge, that the disgusting disfigurıion of the small-pox continued for seldom ess than a year.

The moment after Montagu despatched what he felt as an unkind letter, insulting to the veracity of Adelaide, his heart smote him for it; and when her answer arrived, it was so mildly dignified, in throwing off the imputed misrepresentation of the conralescence of her aspect, that it thrilled n touching fascination to the dormant tenderness of Montagu; and aiding his before felt penitence, in the prompt impulse of the spontaneous feelings thus awakened, he sent off a most kind reply to her, an-

nouncing his hopes of soon being able to procure a commodious house for her, when he would make his appearance at Twickenham, to convoy her to it; and that he hoped she had all her paraphernalia in readiness, for that when she arrived in Sussex, he wished her to appear what she in reality was, the most lovely and elegant amongst women.

The joy, the rapture of the sensitive Adelaide, at receiving once more a letter of affection from her husband, now seemed to threaten the overthrow of her senses; and after reading this epistle at least a dozen times, on each new perusal discovering something yet more to delight her, she ordered her carriage to take her to town, to seek out this now important paraphernalia.

Every thing for the nuptial wardrobe, which Lady Beechbrook had ordered, was executed and sent long since to Twickenham; and all the wedding gifts of the young bride to their several places of destination: but there were many things yet wanting to complete Adelaide's bridal wardrobe, which her uncle, prior to her

marriage, had presented her with a most bountiful pecuniary supply for; and many more she could not resist the impulse of purchasing, although she feared it was extravagance in her: but Montagu had expressed a wish to have her elegantly attired; and our readers must forgive this natural impulse to unusual expense, when they remember it was in preparation for appearing in the same circle with the siren who had spell-bound the heart of her husband from her.

Adelaide, for one emanating beam of brightness, basked in the cheering rays of hope's returning sun, flattering herself at once into the soothing fancy that Bouverie would arrive for her within that week, hastened to expedite all her business in London, and to have all things in readiness for a prompt departure into Sussex.

## CHAPTER VII.

But day passed on, and day, without the arrival of Montagu, or even a letter from him, until the week expired; then four days more dragged heavily; animated expectation daily awaiting to meet by evening the disconsolation of defeat; until the buoyant waves of the rising tide of hope rolled back in reflux, each new one shallower than its predecessor; and sunk at length exhausted on disappointment's desert sand.

Adelaide moped, and Adelaide wept; since she entertained now no doubt the replendent rays of Lady Marian's fascinations had again obscured the little silvery light with which she contrived sometimes to shine; and, in a state of the most hopeless misery, our dejected heroine was seated, the tenth morning after this last delusive epistle from her husband, bent over her harp in pensive sadness, without the power, without the inclination, to sound one now neglected chord; for nothing in life had now one charm for her;

when from her hapless meditation she was aroused by a loud, a hurried peal of the gate bell. Adelaide attempted to rise, but her senses sickened; she could not move; she believed it was Bouverie; and her head, in drooping listlessness, sunk against the desk which held her music book.

The door of the room was now almost immediately thrown open, and Sir Charles Longuiville announced; when Adelaide, again electrified, found power to move; but still tremulously agitated, she could not for a moment articulate; but at length, aiming to excuse her perturbed reception of an old acquaintance, she faltered out—

"I thought it was my long-expected husband;" when, unable longer to command her feelings, she burst into tears.

Sir Charles, extremely distressed, most feelingly regretted the disappointment he had so painfully awakened; and Adelaide, ashamed of her weakness, was soon herself: but not all this promptly acquired firmness could obliterate from the mind of Sir Charles that tender affecting attachment she had thus been led, by surprise, into

betraying for a man, he trembled at believing cherished no love for her.

Adelaide now hastened to inquire for Lady Longuiville.

"I left my dear Louisa uncommonly well, and my cherub boy a perfect pocket Hercules, about a week since, with my mother-in-law, in Mansfield Street; when I ran off to Bexhill to attend an unpleasant court-martial upon a foolish boy of ours, who, thanks to the influence Lady Marian Harley holds over all ranks and degrees of men, was honourably acquitted."

"Then, then, you have seen Colonel Bouverie?" tremulously uttered Adelaide, her heart sinking at the name and influence of Lady Marian; and rising again in joy, at the hope thus presented to her of hearing of her husband.

"I saw him constantly, whilst I was at Bexhill.—But why are you not with him, fair lady?"

"I have been expecting him these ten days to come for me," she falteringly replied, "but I fear he has not been able to get a house yet."

"But at Bexhill I was told it was your fastidiousness was the cause; since you would not appear while so disfigured as you still were by your recent distressing malady: but that, I rejoice to see, was mere romance; since conscience must even be posed to discover now a trace to swear by; and Lady Marian and Mrs. Gayville need no longer apprehend danger to their unvaccinated bantlings from your presence. However, my dear Mrs. Bouverie, although I find you perfectly restored to beauty, although much thinner than when I last saw you, and taller too, yet I am sorry to say, but do not be alarmed when I do say it—I do not think your husband is quite in the way I wish him to be in; and think you ought to be with him.—Nay, nay, turn not so deadly pale, nor look so terrorized; he only wants your attentive care to set him to rights again."

"General Harley has got a most noble mansion belonging to a baronet, who, going to the Madeiras for the recovery of his health and finances, was glad to let his house to the general; who, beside his staff,

who are all resident with him, has large dinner parties daily: so what with gay revels, and the harrassing frolics of a determined Martinet, manœuvring the poor troops in his district from morn till eve, I think your husband may be too much fatigued; who, I am told, returned not long since from Malta in ill health. When you are present, matters must take a different turn; they must then allow him to domesticate in his own home; and all things will soon be well again."

"Well, well," continued Sir Charles, endeavouring to smile, "cry if you must; but cry all at Twickenham, and go to Bexhill with your own animated countenance to cheer your *caro sposo*, whose spirits are not good; and he looks, as I told him, like the ghost of the fine gay spirited Adonis I remember him at Roscoville Abbey, when he was then mining for the future siege of your heart; and whilst I talked to him of you seemed the only moment in which the poor fellow looked as I would have him; so make no delay.—Set off this morning, and arouse him from

the state he is in; which, I prophesy, your presence will promptly prevent from becoming a dangerous one."

In every sentence uttered by Sir Charles, Adelaide read a double meaning. She construed all; and his kind and friendly purpose, in recommending her to join her husband: and though by this reading her terrible alarm for Bouverie's health was hushed, yet the painful one of fear and doubt was awakened in her timid bosom, as to whether she dare go, uninvited by her husband; whether it would not be reprehensible in her to adopt a measure which she could not but suppose, by his not arranging for himself, would be disagreeable to him; and now in a most distressing predicament she found herself:—she shrunk with horror from the idea of appearing insensible to her husband's state of health; and she also equally recoiled from betraying to any individual her fear of proving an unwelcome intruder; but at length, struggling to conquer her anguished sobs, she tremulously said—

"Had I not better, my most kind friend, apprize poor Montagu of my coming, lest—

lest, you know, as his spirits are so low—I might, sir—You know with invalids one cannot act too cautiously—I might, by my unexpected appearance, do mischief:—that is, I only mean through the agitation of surprise."

The eyes of Sir Charles Longuiville were now completely opened; for he read in the despair, the mental struggles so eloquently portrayed in her intelligent countenance, that her suspicions of her husband's constancy were at least awakened; and in deep commiseration for so young, so lovely, and so amiable a sufferer, from disappointed affection, he paused for a moment in deep thought, whether he ought still to persist in advising her to go where the mischiefs which threatened were not veiled from her knowledge; and the result of this rumination was in favour of her going: for he had warily remarked, that when he undauntedly persevered in uttering his raptures of Mrs. Bouverie's beauty and manners, and to repeat the thousand anecdotes of her benevolence which transpired after her departure from Kent, the recoiling misery her husband first evinced at the

theme not only gradually vanished, but by degrees he became so enamoured of the subject, as not readily to relinquish it: and from this remark, and from his own experience of what an amiable, sensible, affectionate wife had power to effect, even unaided by beauty, he hesitated not in pronouncing that "she ought to go;" and encouragingly told her he had prepared Bouverie for her appearance.

"For I told him," he said, "that I should come here to day; and by telling you I thought him not quite well, insure your setting out immediately, in despite of your reluctance to show your face; and upon his telling me he had not been able to procure a house to receive you in, I desired him to take prompt possession of mine; and as we should not want it until after our cherub's innoculation, he might build you a mansion by that time: so now you know you must go, Mrs. Bouverie, as your *sposo* would be most justly offended and hurt if you did not, after hearing he was unwell, and had got a house to receive you in."

As such a plea was given her for intrud-

ing, Adelaide determined to avail herself of it: and whilst Sir Charles partook of the refreshments she ordered for him, our heroine discussed many arrangements with him relative to her immediate journey.

"Oh! how I shall long for yours and Lady Longuiville's arrival in Sussex!" at length Adelaide exclaimed, in the full glow of her gratitude for all his kindness.

"If you knew Lady Longuiville better," replied Sir Charles, smiling with rapture, "I think you could not fail to long for her arrival. Shall I tell you in confidence, Mrs. Bouverie, what is now no longer a secret to my Louisa? I married her to extricate my family from ruin; and not only not caring for her, but disliking her exceedingly; since, a passionate admirer of beauty, I was then distractedly in love with your fair cousin, Celestina; whom I should have offered myself to, had not the distresses of my family come so providentially to withhold me."

"Providentially, indeed!" said the ingenuous Adelaide, "since they led you to a much more fortunate choice."

"Choice it was not," returned Sir

Charles; "but soon Louisa's virtues, her sweetness of disposition, her superior intellect, her winning goodness, elected her my choice; the choice of my fond, adoring, wedded heart: and now, forgive my sincerity, congratulations of escape are the attendants of Lady Celestina's name, if ever I by chance remember it."

"Happy Lady Longuiville!" said Adelaide, in a tone so eloquently impressive, it thrilled its painful meaning to the sympathizing heart of Sir Charles; who, anxious not to impede her journey, to try her chance of averting the menaced destruction of her peace, shortly took his leave.

As it was twelve o'clock when Sir Charles departed, Adelaide almost despaired of the possibility of even four horses to her chaise conveying her to Bexhill ere Montagu had given her up; although she knew, from every thing being in readiness for this long-expected journey, she could be on the road in another hour: and much she wished, as a measure more consonant to her feelings, to have delayed another day, to apprize Bouverie, by that day's post, of her meditated expedition: how-

ever, a moment's reflexion convinced her, that if she hazarded going at all without permission, it must be in consequence of her husband's supposed illness; and, in that case, any delay would appear unfeeling.

As the domestics found Adelaide was all impatience to be gone, they exerted every energy to expedite her departure, which took place a little before one; although Mrs. Ash delayed the carriage some few minutes, to cram it with viands; and the gardener with fruit, and a beautiful selection of the choicest flowers.

The hopes and fears of Adelaide, relative to what her reception might prove from Montagu, her uncertainty of what misery might await her at Bexhill, conspired to the almost subjugation of her firmness; and with the utmost difficulty only could she succeed in concealing her feelings from her tenderly attached companion, Obearn; who attributed all her agitation, her abstraction, her total incapacity of taking sustenance through the day, to her adored nursling's distress at hearing her husband was not well.

At length, as the dusk of evening was deepening to the darker shades of night, our heart-rived traveller entered the beautifully situated, close, old town of Hastings; and, according to the direction of Sir Charles Longuiville, drove to the Swan Inn; where he told her he had desired Colonel Bouverie to station a guide, against the possible event of her arrival, to steer her to her place of destination; when, as they were proceeding up to the inn door, a gentleman from a curricle, which had just seemed about to drive off, called to Dennis. It was Bouverie: and Adelaide's heart dilated with joy and tenderness, almost overpowering her; since she hailed his being in waiting for her himself, an auspicious omen.

The chaise now, by order of Dennis, drew up by the side of the curricle. Adelaide put out her trembling hand, which Bouverie coldly took, without a pressure: and the heart of his wife seemed to receive its death wound.

"How could you travel so late, Mrs. Bouverie?" Montagu exclaimed, in a chilling tone, most foreign to cordiality.—"I

had given you up, and was just on the wing for Bexhill."

"I—I did not hear you were unwell until near twelve this morning. I thought I was travelling very slowly; but the people told me, at the inns, I could go no faster, Montagu."

"What a little simpleton!" said Bouverie, something softened by Adelaide's voice and answer, "to attend to what that busy body said. I am not unwell."

"Thank Heaven!" she exclaimed; "but, lest you should be so, will you not come into the chaise to me, Montagu, to go to Bexhill secure from the night air?"

"No," he replied; "the way to your house, Mrs. Bouverie, is intricate; and I must prove the guide. Boys, follow me:" and now rapidly he drove on.

"*Augh!* then *Musha*," thought Dennis, "I wish the *darlingt* was in *Miss* Bouverie's skin once more; since that's all the *natur* yourself has for her;" while Adelaide sunk back in the carriage, the silent statue of despair; and Obearn, with tearful eyes and anguished heart, now believed the ambiguous hints in Richard the groom's

letters to Dennis had terrible meaning; and that the adored child of her fond care was not a welcome guest in Sussex.

Bouverie drove with great rapidity out of Hastings; but ere he reached the white rock he slackened his pace considerably; and, before he arrived at Bulverhithe, his horses moved as slow as foot could fall.

"Alas!" thought Adelaide, "he fears I shall be there too soon."

At length they entered upon a pretty winding acclivity, through a well wooded paddock, and came to a very small house, in appearance like a cottage. Bouverie alit, his curricle drove off; the door of Adelaide's carriage was opened, and he presented his hand to assist his wife out; but it was with no solicitude; nothing that evinced the zeal of affection.

The trembling heart-rived Adelaide could scarcely support herself; and receiving little aid from her husband, she nearly fell out of the carriage. This narrowly escaped danger seemed to arouse him; he caught her in his arms, and carried her into the house, inquiring in a tone of interest and alarm, "If she was hurt?"

"Heavens!" he added, "how you tremble! Are you cold?"

"Yes, very. I have been completely chilled," she faintly answered.

"We will have a fire instantly."

"Oh! no,—It is only agitation."

"Agitation, indeed! sir," said Obearn, who now had found her way into the room, to learn if her child was hurt. "I never saw any thing in the state she has been in since Sir Charles Longuiville brought her the intelligence of your not being well this morning."

"Confound Sir Charles Longuiville!" exclaimed Bouverie petulantly.

"Since his departure," continued Obearn, "she has done nothing but weep; and not one morsel of nourishment has entered her lips."

"And when has that same passed her lips, I will be mighty glad to know, Norah Obearn?" exclaimed Dennis, who found his way in too, to learn if the *darlingt* was hurt. "Never since his honour left her; and I'm the man that knows, and more grief to me!—for it was I took the untasted victuals from before her, day after

day. Morning, noon, and night, it was the pastime of poor Dennis to see the child he helped to rear breaking the pure heart of her; and signs by it: when the candles march in, his honour will be seeing 'tis nigh hand skin and bone we have the luck to bring him; *whin* 'twas as plump as a partridge, herself was, the day she married him, sixteen weeks come next Thursday."

"My poor Adelaide!" said Bouverie, gently drawing her to him, and folding her in his arms, "I hope, I trust the grain of Sussex will soon fatten my tender partridge."

"Oh!" thought Adelaide, "all interest for me is not extinguished;" and her sensitive heart dilated with a faint beam of hope.

"Come Dennis, my good fellow," said Bouverie, "cannot you make interest to get a fire lit to warm this darling child you helped to rear, whose hands are like death, I declare? Do, for Heaven's sake, see what can be done! although you will find you are dreadfully off for fellow-servants.

No time being allowed me, I could only scramble up one soldier's wife as a scrub."

"Whilst I am here, sir," said Obearn, "I trust you will never feel the want of any services that my ability can perform."

"I do not doubt your promptitude to oblige," he returned; "but now I almost fear to put your services to the test, to procure candles for us; since I almost fear to display to Adelaide the miseries of the first habitation I ever procured for her."

"Surely, dear Montagu, the house which accommodated Lady Longuiville," said Adelaide, "surely—

"This house never accommodated Lady Longuiville," said Bouverie, pettishly interrupting her—"No, I did not accept Sir Charles's house; would not, upon any consideration, accept an obligation from such an officious fellow; who, because I looked fatigued after a review, chose to make out at once I required the care of my wife; and then to hurry you down, at a moment's notice, and almost killing you with alarm and fatigue, and not suffering me to find a house at all proper for you."

"Montagu," said Adelaide, in the most ineffably sweet voice of unsophisticated tenderness, "if it is your habitation as well as mine, I shall perceive no defect in it."

The tones of Adelaide thrilled their effect to the heart of Montagu, and surprised it with a sensation which for weeks it had not felt for her; and now taking her hand, as he pressed it he was about to tell her, "That the distance of this house being three miles from General Harley's, it would not often be in his power to make it his habitation:" but the words died on his lips unuttered.

The soldier's wife now brought in some wood to light a fire, and Dennis candles: but how in one instant did the introduction of lights revulse every sensation softening towards interest for Adelaide in the mind of Bouverie! for still he beheld her thickly veiled, and pronounced her a mean deceiver, who had persisted in a false representation of the disappearance of the small-pox, and thus eluded his prohibition to coming thither to alarm Lady Marian

for her youngest cherub; but before the domestics he made no comment: yet the tone of his voice, as he inquired "How she liked the spacious and elegant dwelling her friend Sir Charles Longuiville had forced her into?" told to Adelaide at once that some unpropitious revolution had been effected in his mind.

"If," said Adelaide mildly, and mournfully too, "we find out its disagreeables and inconveniences are too numerous to admit of our being contented with it, we can remove to a better, should a better become vacant."

"Ye-es," said Bouverie; "but it is a horrid torment to move about so:—it even annoyed and unhinged me to day removing from Marino."

Adelaide's heart now almost swelled to bursting; but, determined to sustain the conflict without sinking to a whining mourner, she replied in tones resembling animated cheerfulness—

"Oh fie! a soldier complain of annoyance from moving! Come, I promise to prove myself a better campaigner than

that.—A route shall never disconcert me, unless it bears you to battle, Montagu, or to climes I am forbidden to go to."

The heart of Bouverie would again have felt the power of Adelaide, only indignation for her fancied deceptions, and his fears for Lady Marian's darling bantling, arose up to shield it; and, starting from his seat, said, "He must go and see what sort of quarters his poor horses had got into in that odious place."

Montagu remained away so long, that poor Adelaide at length concluding this protracted absence was intentional, determined to go and take off her hat and bathe her eyes, they felt so uneasy from so much weeping.

Obearn, not knowing the way up stairs, summoned the soldier's wife to be their guide.

"Does your husband belong to Colonel Bouverie's regiment?" Adelaide inquired.

"No, my lady; to the artillery drivers."

"Dear!" cried Obearn, in a tone of chagrin, "and how came my master to find you out?"

"It was Mrs. Coleman, my Lady Ma-

rian's *lady's maid*, as found me out, ma'am; cause I chared at the general's, and had no dejection to come and oblige, having myself and husband and child all had the small-pox."

"What had the small-pox to say to the business?" demanded Obearn haughtily.

"Oh! cause all others was afeard to come and wait on the lady; who, Mrs. Coleman said, had the small-pox so cruel bad, it was feared as how the defection would never be got rid of where she comed; and as Mrs. Coleman was so mortal good to me, and my Lady Marian herself even speaking to me in the most respectful and affablest manner about it, and giving me a one pound note to buy a frock for the boy, I should scarce have found the heart to refuse; set in case it was the plague as was coming."

"So, so," thought Adelaide; "a spy in Lady Marian's pay! but you shall decamp, my good friend, to-morrow, I promise you."

"This black hole is to be your room, ma'am," said the soldier's wife, as they entered a most comfortless looking chamber.

—" This was the only house as Mrs. Coleman could get the folks to admit you, ma'am, on count of your disease, except one as was near the general's, which my lady did not choose, on count of Master Mountacue; and that was why too she put the colonel against Sir Charles *Longforveal's* offer; for that was a nice clean house, quite handy to the general's, and commanding a full view of every mortal as goes to and thro."

" No wonder then it was rejected," thought Adelaide, who now took off her hat, and with it her veil, which she had tied on to conceal any betraying emotion in her first interview with Bouverie, which she supposed would have taken place in daylight.

The moment Adelaide unveiled, the soldier's wife, who had lingered rather obtrusively in the room, to gratify her curiosity, started with such violence, and looked so ludicrously amazed, that Obearn, who had been boiling with indignation, exclaimed—

" Did you ever see the small-pox with such an aspect as this before?"

" Lauk! ma'am," cried the woman, " this

can never, *surelie*, be the lady as was *espeted* for the colonel's wife?"

"Indeed," said Obearn, "the colonel has no other wife to expect."

"Then I knows what," returned the woman; "there will be pretty surprise at the general's, to find it is quite the wrong lady as is comed down, and not the plumb pudding, as they calls her."

The woman now retiring, Adelaide, afraid of any unpleasant comment from Obearn that might distress her, or pose her to parry, hastened to arrange her beautiful hair; and when she had, by bathing them, succeeded in removing the trace of tears from her eyes, she hastened down to her shabby little drawing-room to await her husband; cherishing now, no doubt, this miserable abode had been obtained on purpose to disgust her with Sussex, and to preclude the possibility of her receiving company, and, in consequence, of accepting invitations.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Bouverie at length came, in a snail creep; and Adelaide, who never had seen him in his uniform until that evening, and which displayed the exquisite symmetry of his strikingly fine and graceful form to such advantage, she could not resist the impulse of turning her head, as she stood at the fire, to steal a look of mournful admiration at him!

Her veil being off, instantly attracted his attention, and accelerated his pace: when soon he flew forward, caught her in his arms; for the banished belief of her having meanly deceived him, restored the interest she had for a few moments after her arrival so powerfully awakened in his bosom; and drawing her rapidly towards the candles, rapturously exclaimed—

"Oh! what a joyful surprise! not one trace of that direful malady remains, my Adelaide! From my heart I congratulate

you!" and he tenderly pressed her to his bosom:—and, as he did so, the remembrance of how he had insulted her veracity upon the subject, struck upon his consciousness, and vibrated his whole frame with the nervous agitation of compunction: when his tender wife, making no allusion to the mortifying discredit thrown on her assertion, now so triumphantly substantiated for her, turned to the bell, and rang for tea.

And now through the remainder of this conscience-riving evening, the admiration and interest of Bouverie for his lovely wife felt perceptible increase; but so did his misery, withal; since the more he admired, the more he mourned her destiny; the more anguish he experienced at the idea of the discovery she soon must make, that her happiness was blighted in the blossom of her early days; and the more contrite he became for his infatuated reprehensibility in deceiving her into affection for him: but no thought turned now, as formerly, upon Adelaide's superseding Lady Marian in his heart. Oh! no, that

would be to consign the adoring Marian to the misery of hopeless attachment, and must not be thought of.

Bouverie had told Lady Marian, when most unwillingly he parted from her to go to Hastings, in the fear awakened of our heroine's arrival, that, as a *must do* attention, he should not be able to avoid breakfasting with his wife the following morning; yet, when morning came, and that he did breakfast with her, he felt it as an attention more of choice than necessity; and, after it was ended, he lingered on and on, each new moment awakening more unwillingness to depart, until a distant roll of a drum, and sound of bugle horns, aroused him from the fascinations of a society, that seemed teeming with menace to the influence of Lady Marian.

The eyes of Adelaide rested on the retreating form of Montagu, as he now gallopped on his charger from the door, as long as she could see him; and then in heart-rived anguish burst into tears, and mourned in agonized belief, that all the kind attention the husband she adored now paid her, was merely because she was

his wife, whom he was too amiable to be unkind to:—but, at length, the recollection of less important themes arrested her tears; and ere she sat down to write to Mrs. Ash, which she determined to do, "to send her the cook from Twickenham, (who had promised to come to her, should she wish for her,) with a couple of other female domestics, without delay," she summoned Obearn to a conference.

"My Norah!" she said, "this is a wretched place you have accompanied your poor child to."

Obearn burst into tears, and sobbed as if her heart would burst with anguish.

Adelaide was sensibly affected; yet, resolute not to betray the conscious feeling that shook her very soul, she threw her arms around Obearn's neck, and affectionately kissed her, as she wiped away her tears, and said—

"Come, come, don't cry, but help me, my own nursy.—I am resolved to turn this wretched place into the cottage of comfort;—at least no one shall feel horrorized at visiting me here."

"*We* can clean it," said Obearn;

"which, indeed, poor Dennis began to do, in the kitchen, hours ago."

"Good Dennis!" said Adelaide, with tears trembling in her eyes; "but I mean not to make slaves of you and him, who love me; and, although I fancy clearing the Augean stable was an exploit scarcely more difficult in the achievement, I am resolved not to be discouraged; since I own I should feel a pride in making this house habitable; not to be compelled to give Colonel Bouverie the trouble of removing. Do you know where I could find my landlord and landlady?"

"They are not far off; they live in a farm at the back of the house; which is as beautifully clean, as this is the reverse."

Mrs. Harper, the landlady, was summoned; and soon a neat, but rather a discontented, looking woman entered; from whose appearance our heroine did not augur much in favour of her project.

Mrs. Harper started as she entered; and Adelaide, with much conciliating sweetness, requested to know, "if she could recommend some persons to her, who

could expeditiously and properly clean out the house, and wash the hangings?"

Mrs. Harper coloured, and rather dryly replied, "She did not suppose, as she belonged to the military, she would have thought that necessary."

"Oh! but I do though," replied Adelaide; "I delight in neatness."

"So it seems, ma'am; for, to say truth, skin and clothes, you be like a perfect snowball: but the fact is, I have had very poor luck with the military I have let my house to; and all has gone to rack. —The last family, with seven limbs of children, had only one dawdle of a soldier's wife to do for all; and the mother never doing nothing but read story books, and trick herself out: so that a broom or a duster was never put to an earthful thing during the twelvemonth they were here; and they only went out yesterday; and Mrs. Coleman came in such a hurry to take the place, and praised the neatness of every thing so, and said, "you must think yourself in a paradise here;" that, thinks I, 'tis for a dirty dressed-out *dawdle* she is taking it, that any thing

will do for: but now I see 'tis otherwise, I'll have the place cleaned up properly in the course of a few hours; for we have thirty women now at work on the farm; and I can send in a set of them, whose honesty I can depend on, to clean all properly.—But pray, ma'am, may I ask, are you the only lady expected here?"

"The only one."

"Why, ma'am, I was told it was one in the small-pox was to come."

"One out of it, they meant," said Adelaide. "I had that disease now almost four months ago."

"Lauk! lauk! what stories some folks do like to tell! Why, bless you! from the mess Mrs. Coleman told, I sends off my darling little grandson beyond Battle, out of your way, although he was *waxoneated*: but we are old fashioned folks, and do not know how to trust to it; and we have been so unkid ever since, at the loss of little funny Hal, with his rosy cheeks, and curly locks, and pretty speech, that my poor master and I came almost to the determination to beg of you to quit."

"You now perceive there is no occasion

for that," said Adelaide, smiling; "so pray send for your grandson immediately; for I too shall be glad of the return of funny Hal, for no one can be fonder of children than Colonel Bouverie and myself: and this, my dear, dear nurse, I know from sweet experience, cannot be unkind to any thing. Our butler is the playfellow and humble servant of every child; we have not a dog to hurt the little fellow; so that you may let him run in and out here, as you do in your own house."

"Lord bless your beautiful face!" exclaimed Mrs. Harper, with the emphasis of rapture, "I'll send the *shay* for him this instant; and if Mrs. Obearn will have the goodness to put down on a paper all she thinks of that is wanting in the kitchen, I will send for them to Hastings: and as to washing the hangings, we can manage without; for, to let you into a bit of a secret, ma'am, I have had furniture made up, of the *beautifullest* real India chints; for, to let you into another secret, we be in the way of getting such things for a song; for all the best rooms in the house; all *made* up quite tasty in London, with pea

green lining, ma'am, and rose coloured muslin drapery: but, lauk! I never had the heart to put them up, we had such ramshackle lodgers; and none who ever noticed Hal, although he was born, pretty soul! upon the premises: but you shall have them: and the grand looking glasses and *candle-Abrahams* we got from France, to make the place fit for *qualaty*.—Lauk! ma'am, when you see all, I think you will be pleased; particularly the sofa *kivers* will do you good to see them, they fit so like your own young skin, ma'am."

Adelaide thought it would do her good to see them; and, as she expressed her thanks for Mrs. Harper's accommodating kindness, said, "it would be almost a pity to put up the beautiful chints with such greasy old dismal arras."

Mrs. Harper began to titter, and at length to laugh outright; and when she could speak without the aid of holding her sides, she informed her fair tenant—

"That beastly arras had been nailed on, to *kiver* and keep clean, as good luck would have it, the most *beautifullest* Indian paper that was ever seen, to match the chints."

" And as soon as the place is dry, after the scrubbing," she continued, " my master (as you mean to notice Hal, and be fond of the pretty soul,) will take down this greasy arras, and put up the curtains in no time: and as for French and India china, and matting, I have as much as would fill a warehouse; and if you come with me, ma'am, you shall make choice of what you like, to make the place fit for the like of you."

Adelaide was in raptures at the idea of thus metamorphosing her dwelling, from Spite Villa into Fancy's Cottage, to surprise her husband! " Who would think," she said, " she dealt in magic?" and magic certainly she had dealt in—that of winning a heart by the enchantment of her sweet manners. And to all this anticipating pleasure of surprising there was but one alloy; that of having the artillery driver's wife in the house, to convey intelligence to the general's: but that annoyance, Obearn soon satisfied her, could be removed without compunction, as she had refused to assist Dennis in cleaning the kitchen; saying, " They never cleaned any thing

out of public sight at the general's:" and Mrs. Coleman's dirty spy was therefore civilly dismissed, well recompensed for her day of nominal service; and was instantly replaced by a neat daughter of a farmer, recommended by Mrs. Harper.

Whilst the essential business of cleaning was going forward most expeditiously and effectually, under the direction of Mrs. Harper, the active and enthusiastic Adelaide made employment for herself, Obearn, Lee, and Dennis, on the exterior of her dwelling; where she found growing immense untrained masses of beautiful and fragrant shrubs, which merely wanted a judicious hand to lead, in mantling luxuriance, even to the upper windows; and in perambulating the premises, she discovered some rustic looking trunks and branches of trees lying useless, which she begged of Mr. Harper, who declared, the moment he beheld her, he should never find the heart to refuse her any thing.

Immediately upon obtaining leave to make what use she pleased of this misshapen timber, she procured carpenters and labourers; who, by six o'clock in

the evening, completed, under the direction of Adelaide, an uncommonly pretty looking portico, of pleasing rustic appearance, before the drawing and dining rooms, as out of each apartment a door opened between the windows upon the picturesquely sloping lawn; from whence was seen an uninterrupted, most beautiful view of the sea: and as soon as one arcade of this little fancy-structure was completed, she, with her already mentioned domestic auxiliaries, trained an assemblage of roses, woodbines, and other fragrant shrubs, both internally and externally over it, as a specimen for Bouverie of what she purposed in time to accomplish.

The scowering dried like magic, from the beams of a powerful sun; so that interior adornments were not long delayed: and by nine o'clock at night, one chamber, Bouverie's dressing-room, and the drawing-room, were transformed by Adelaide's taste and diligence, and from the smugglers' stores, into three apartments that would not have disgraced the most celebrated *bijou* in the united kingdom. And after the decoration of her own

lovely self, for the arrival of her husband, the last preparation for his reception was, to adorn the drawing-room with the flowers she had brought from Twickenham, which she knew Bouverie delighted in; and after ordering a tray to be brought in of those viands she thought would please him most, she seated herself at work to await the return of Montagu; while two handsome candelabras, and other lights in the room, displayed to full advantage all the striking improvements she had occasioned: nor could Eve, in decorating the bower for Adam, have exerted herself with more tender solicitude to please her lord and master, than did poor Adelaide.

A handsome time-piece, with which Mrs. Harper had also enriched our heroine, chimed eleven; then the intervening quarters, until twelve, sounding painfully through the disappointed heart of the expectant; but still no Bouverie appeared.

The work of Adelaide fell, at the last stroke of twelve, from her nerveless hands; she had no longer power to guide her needle; she took up a book to read, but it appeared inexplicable to her comprehen-

sion:—her lights burned dimly; she had no feeling now of animation to give them new brilliancy; for the witchery of Lady Marian upon her husband's heart operated now on her's, destroying with her peace the very essence of her energies.

At length she strolled into the portico (she had, in the buoyancy of youthful expectation, erected), to observe, as she viewed the night, if there appeared one cloud of menace to her husband's health, as he rode through the night air home. In this contemplation she beheld the wide expanse of a gently swelling sea.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "each wave bends its course towards me; but not my husband."

One o'clock proclaimed itself, and an alarm of a different nature shook the agitated bosom of the tender wife; she feared some accident; and at length, wound into an agony of apprehension, she was about to ring to make inquiries relative to the steadiness of the horse Bouverie rode, when Obearn made her appearance to entreat her child to retire.

"For it is useless," she said, in the diffi-

cultly suppressed tones of recent weeping, "for you to sit up, to destroy your health, my heart's treasure! since Lee says, 'it may be hours ere my master returns; for he remembers not one night, whilst they were staying at Marino, that the colonel went up to his room before three o'clock.'

"Not—not drinking all that time, nurse. Montagu is not a toper."

"No, not drinking; for it was the ladies kept these hours; Lady Marian, and her friends: the general was usually put to bed drunk about eleven.—Come, my precious child! take something to refresh you, and go to bed."

"I am not hungry, my dear Obearn!"

"No," said Obearn, in a faltering voice, "I dare say not; but, to oblige me, eat one morsel, to admit of your swallowing some wine: consider the immensity of fatigue you have gone through this day.—To little purpose," she added, in an under tone.

"I will try and eat a bit of bread, and take half a glass of wine, since you wish it; and, indeed, I am very tired; but I cannot go to bed, my nursy. I know not if Mon-

tagu might not feel offended, conceiving I considered it too much trouble to sit up for him."

"Yes, my treasure! but you are not to sacrifice your health to etiquette," said Obearn, who feared, from all she had gleaned from Lee, that Colonel Bouverie would be as well pleased if his wife betook herself to her eternal rest.

"I shall discover, when he comes home, what he wishes me to do, my Norah!" returned the dejected Adelaide, "and shall act accordingly in future: but, as he stays out so late, I shall have no comfort in showing him our improvements to night; therefore I may extinguish my fine *candle-Abrahams*, as Mrs. Harper calls them; and now, my nursy, as I have done my supper, I think, perhaps, it is better to remove the tray, lest he should be hurt at thinking I suffered inconvenience by waiting so long for my sandwich."

But ere this wish of Adelaide's could be obeyed, her husband arrived.

It was but a short distance from the entrance door of this cottage to the beautified little room our heroine now sat in,

trembling with the chill of grief and agitation; yet Bouverie, apparently as reluctant at returning to her as he had seemed at quitting her, was some minutes ere he entered, with an aspect so repellent, that the heart-rived Adelaide almost wished herself in the cemetery with her parents.

"Mrs. Bouverie," he coldly said, "I am sorry I did not tell you this ceremony of waiting up for me would be distressing to me, as the hours at Marino are late; and therefore my stay there according with them, this sitting up would only prove fatigue to you, and not a very pleasing reflexion for me."

"Now I know what is your wish, I shall in future comply with it," said Adelaide mildly; "for to-night I had no guide but my own wish to pay you every attention."

"You are very good; but had you not better now terminate this unnecessary fatigue? I'll ring for Obearn;" when now rising from a seat, into which he had listlessly thrown himself on entering, without venturing to look upon her, whom for the last few hours he had been under tutorage

to abhor: but, however, to this neither his heart nor conscience could subscribe to the possibility or justice of; and agitated by the misery of his mind, Bouverie staggered against one of the immense and beautiful porcelaine jars Adelaide had filled with flowers to please him.

"Pshaw!" he pettishly exclaimed, "one cannot turn round in this beastly place without the chance of breaking one's nose, or shins."

Adelaide blushed to the deepest tint of any rose the vase contained; and tears would have trembled in her eyes at the non-effect of her toils, had they not been already filled by the distillations of anguished grief.

"Mrs. Obearn!" exclaimed Montagu, the moment she appeared, "I am surprised, if Mrs Bouverie was so childish to wish to sit up for me, that you permitted it; since you cannot but be conscious of how delicate she is, and that she requires care."

"*Mrs. Bouverie,*" returned Obearn, with an emphasis her ardent heart inspired, "staid up, sir, in defiance of my *humble* advice; conceiving you would be

leased to find her here, to receive you; ut, as you say too truly, sir, she is a deliate plant; and I see, I feel, if she is not ideed taken care of, I shall lose the harge,—the delight, of nearly seventeen ears:" and tears, that would not brook estraint, rolled down the cheeks of Obearn: when Adelaide, alarmed lest her urse's tears should offend her husband, poke cheeringly to Obearn, as she playfully patted her cheek, and hurried her on efore her out of the room.

The fear expressed by Obearn for the health of Adelaide, with her confirming tears, thrilled through the heart of Montagu with the most agonizing terror.—"Could her health be menaced; and had he allowed her to remain so long a prey to grief for their separation?—And now she was come, had he received her unkindly? Had he left her to such hours of forlorn solitude, to mourn for his inattention; whilst he was feeding, like a voluptuary, upon the raptures of his life; the tender smiles, the impassioned glances, the intoxicating accents, of ardent love, from

the woman who enthusiastically adored him; whose life was in his power; her existence hanging upon the fervour, the idolatry, the constancy of his love? And had he returned to the inestimable Adelaide, the sweetest blossom of innocence and beauty, to speak coldly to,—not to look upon;—to act like a rough blast, to accelerate her doom?"

In an agony of alarm and penitence, the infatuated Bouverie paced this metamorphosed room, without observing any thing in it but the tray; and which, although so elegantly arranged, his poor wife had not lessened. "It was but too, too evident her appetite was alarmingly flown: she was most perceptibly attenuated: and if all should end fatally!"—the heart, the senses of Bouverie sunk, and sickened at the supposition; and not intoxicating passion, arraying the widowed Lady Marian in all her infatuating, dazzling charms, as his future bride, could cheer, could pacify him; for Adelaide's heavenly virtues, as she seemed to be early destined for her home, now stood before him in their bright

array; and his very soul seemed to cling to his wife, as to the very essence of his everlasting happiness.

At length Montagu snatched up a candle, and flew to his dressing-room, that he might the sooner, by the tender solicitude of his newly awakened anxiety for his Adelaide, remove the painful impression the ungraciousness of his manner must have made upon her gentle, susceptible feelings.

Bouverie's thoughts were so completely occupied by his alarm and compunction, that he observed no alteration in his dressing-room; nor spoke to Lee, until, as he was about to retire to his chamber, he said:

"Do not call me, within an hour, as early as usual, because it would disturb my poor Adelaide, after keeping her up so late:" and now turning to retire, something in the appearance of the room attracted his attention.

"Hey!" he exclaimed, "who has blanched my black almond? But this is not my original dressing-room.—Here is taste, comfort, and neatness, exquisitely combined."

"It is indeed, sir, the same room," said ee, "which my mistress had thus transformed; herself assisting, with her own hands, to beautify it; and put the flowers in the vases the last thing, that they might be the sweeter and fresher for you, as she could not endure to have you dress in such a pig-sty."

## CHAPTER IX.

Before Montagu left his dressing-room the subsequent morning, he despatched an apology to General Harley for not attending his *déjeûné* and the parade. To fail in attendance upon the general was an easy matter to Bouverie's feelings; but he even thought that morning he could have given up an appointment with his adored Marian, to remain a few hours with the sweetly interesting Adelaide: however, as Lady Marian would be engaged with company until noon, he should sacrifice nothing of his Platonic raptures, by dedicating some portion of his time to his too much neglected wife.

Adelaide was in the drawing-room before her husband descended, and where she had laid out for him a *déjeûné*, far surpassing, in elegance and comfort, that which he had relinquished at the general's.

The first thing which attracted Bouverie's attention, upon entering the room, was Adelaide herself presiding there in all the

interesting sweetness of inartificial innocence and beauty; when at length the blushing, hoping, fearing wife, oppressed by his undeviating gaze, lest he should discover that her bosom was the seat of inquietude, wishing to divert his attention from resting exclusively on her, timidly said—

"You most highly flattered me last night, Montagu, by your approbation of the alterations I had caused in two of our apartments; yet, this morning, the more striking ones in a third seem to escape your observation."

Bouverie now, for the first time since his entrance, turned his attention from his wife, and looked around.

"Adelaide," he exclaimed in astonishment, "you must account for all this; my comprehension cannot take it in.—What incantation have you practised, to turn disgusting horrors into all that can delight and charm?"

"A determination to remedy the disgusting evils which encompassed us, led to all this apparent necromancy," replied Adelaide, smiling; "but which, I cannot say

was effected without a magic spell, which by accident I stumbled on;—a youthful *genii*, who performed, like Aladdin's lamp, these wonders for me." And our heroine now, with much vivacity, portrayed for him her scenes with the Harpers; and with feeling delineated their adoring fondness for their grandchild.

Whilst fascinated admiration enchanted the lighter feelings of Bouverie during this animated recital, his more serious ones were writhing in compunction's agony; in the pained retrospection of his having permitted the ardently impassioned jealous love of Lady Marian to select such a habitation for his wife, to disconcert and send her from him; and that the feminine endowments and domestic excellence of that very neglected insulted wife had, by their bright influence, turned these very insults to her glory; and the disgusts they had encompassed her by, into magic spells, to charm and fix her immoveably in the very spot they had plotted to chase her from.

When breakfast was ended, Adelaide led her approving husband through the range of all her commenced transformations: but

of all her projected and executed improvements, the one which delighted Bouverie the most was her rustic portico; for in that her taste and ingenuity solely caused its beautiful formation; and requesting her to go on with her sweet fancy's structure, he most diligently assisted her in training her fragrant adornments to their destined stations, until the curricle was announced about ten o'clock.

"Do not look so sorrowfully disappointed, my Adelaide," exclaimed Montagu, "I am not going from you yet; but you, my delicate, my rare, my lovely plant, require air, and I must give it you."

Bouverie now took Adelaide a most beautiful round through the picturesque scenery of that neighbourhood; during which she had been the happiest of the happy, had not her desponding heart told her that all this kindness, these sweet, affectingly tender attentions, were only the tribute of his compassionate pity, inspired by the suggestions of Obearn relative to her menaced health; nor even did this desponding belief become less firm, when *he bade* her the adieu of evident reluctance,

and with a promise to return again to her as soon as possibility would admit of it.

But he found no possibility that would admit of his return, until four o'clock in the morning; for Lady Marian, alarmed at his truancy for so many hours, exerted every seductive blandishment to detain him from her she now feared was indeed a formidable rival; and as Adelaide affected deep sleep when he entered her room, he delusively hoped he had not destroyed her rest.

Bouverie had promised to breakfast with the siren Marian the following morning; but, when morning came, compunction pleading in favour of Adelaide, he determined to take that repast with his wife; and to compromise with Lady Marian, under the plausible pretence of not injuring his interest with Lord De Moreland, for permission to dedicate some of his mornings, and even a day now and then, to Adelaide.

After breakfast, Adelaide put a parcel of visiting tickets into Bouverie's hands, which had been left at their cottage during her excursion with him the preceding day;

and by which he found the general and his staff, and every officer of his own regiment, had been to pay their respects to Adelaide.

"And these visits were paid after my return," said Adelaide, laying the cards of Lady Marian Harley, Mrs. Gayville, and Mrs. Warren, before him.

"Yes, they told me," said Bouverie, passing his hand over his face, to conceal the variation of colour the name of Lady Marian had occasioned; "they told me they had called: and why, as you were returned, did you not admit them? Although, upon second thoughts, I am rather glad you did not, until all your beautiful improvements are completed; since I anticipate much pleasure in the astonishment they will experience, when they visit you in this necessity-compelled abode, to find the power is my Adelaide's to turn the place that she inhabits into a paradise."

"But, my dear Montagu, you asked me why I did not admit Lady Marian Harley and her fair friends? And my answer is, They gave me not the power; since I was *only* honoured by the visit of their proxy."

"It cannot be possible they visited you by proxy!" exclaimed Bouverie, his fine countenance illumined with a bright glow of indignation.—"Who received the cards?"

"Dennis."

"It must be his blunder then."

"Possibly a duet of Irish composition," said Adelaide, smiling, "since the man who brought the cards was his own dear countryman; and, in mutual ecstasy at meeting, they stopped together to cement a friendship, that one would imagine, from Dennis's raptures, he expects to endure for life; in which his communicative brother Paddy informed him, Lady Marian was gone to Hastings with—with a-a—some of her friends; and left to him the honour of visiting me for her."

Bouverie was visibly disconcerted, both at this disrespect of mere formal civility to his wife, which Lady Marian had concealed from him; and by Fitzpatrick the butler having found his way thither to commence a friendship with Adelaide's servants; and, after a gloomy pause, he said—

"Adelaide, my *love*,"—and love was uttered with such an electrifying emphasis,

it thrilled, with joy's amazement, through the dilating heart of the almost hope-phrensied Adelaide, "I will drive you in the curricle this morning, to return these visits of cool ceremony."

"No, my dear Montagu," she gently said, "do not take me yet. Remember they have apprehensions of infection; and we have no right to distress the feelings of any one."

"My sweet philanthropist," replied Bouverie, gazing with unequivocal admiration on her, "I will, with your gentle leave, for once reign lord and master; and although only to the door at Marino I shall take you; and that, when there, wild horses should not tear you from my side to enter at present; oblige me, my love, and condescend to dress for effect;—well, you always do;—becomingly you cannot; since in you Nature laughs the efforts of adornment to scorn."

The cheeks of the delightedly amazed Adelaide glowed with the brightest tints of beauty's bloom, and tears of unexpected joy started to her eyes; and with heart *dilating* with rapture at the sweet incense

of eulogium from her husband, she flew on the expanded wings of willingness to oblige him, to arrange her dress for the occasion, in unison with his wishes; and as with exulting approbation he gazed on her at her return, he was forcibly struck with how fascinatingly she had combined taste, fashion, elegance, and simplicity, with the most attractive delicacy.

Bouverie now led Adelaide to the curricle, and drove her to Marino, the present residence of General Harley; where Mr. Fitzpatrick, obligingly anticipating questions, informed them "Lady Marian was at home."

Instantly Bouverie handed his own and Adelaide's cards to Fitzpatrick; and coldly desiring "Colonel and Mrs. Bouverie's compliments," turned with an animated smile to speak to his wife, and whirled rapidly from the door, without even one straying gaze at Lady Marian, who, with one glance from his quick eye, he perceived was standing in shade within a window, observing them minutely, and striving to penetrate full clearly the exquisitely beau-

tiful point lace veil that overshadowed the agitated countenance of Adelaide.

They had scarcely reached the termination of the avenue on their return, when they encountered General Harley, his major of brigade, aides-de-camp, a Colonel Lonsdale of the engineers, an inmate also at Marino, to aid the general in his military works,—when the introduction took place of the blushing Adelaide to this equestrian troop of eager gazers.

"I hope Lady Marian was at home, Mrs. Bouverie," said General Harley, whom Adelaide was extremely surprised to find a handsome, martial looking man, of seven and thirty, of easy good-natured manners.

"Why that was immaterial," returned Montagu with *hauteur*, "as we merely called to leave our cards, general."

"What was that useless ceremony for?" demanded the general, unaffectedly astonished.

"I really am at a loss to know," returned Bouverie, with a sarcastic smile; "but the ladies of Marino themselves set us the example, even by the more frigid form of visiting Adelaide by proxy yesterday."

"By the d—l!" exclaimed the general, on his part most *un*ceremoniously; "come back with me, and spend the day with us like friends, and not stand sending gales of ceremony to blow you asunder to all eternity."

"I am extremely sorry it is not in my power to accept your kind invitation, General Harley," said Adelaide, breaking silence in the dulcet tones of softest melody—"but you seem not to know the existing interdict to my entering your house at present; in the unsubdued alarm of Lady Marian and Mrs. Gayville, of their children catching a very obnoxious malady from me."

"My service to them; and tell them the Emperor of China's lap dog had the hooping cough in 1666, and to beware of tea," exclaimed the general.

"But we must be lenient to maternal fears, if even carried beyond reason," said Major Gayville, a pompous coxcomb, and bigotted satellite to the orb whose station was the most conspicuous.—"By some little mistake, some unfortunate misrepresentation, these adoring, exemplary mo-

thers, Lady Marian and Mrs. Gayville, have been led to conceive the contagious effect of your late distressing malady is not yet removed, Mrs. Bouverie."

"One effect is certainly not removed," said Adelaide, smiling with ineffable sweetness, as she broke from the restraining spells of timidity, to speak before so many gazing auditors—"that of closing the doors of General Harley against me at present, by the hand of maternal caution; and believe me, sir, no wish of mine shall ever operate in leading me, voluntarily, to wound feelings so natural and so amiable."

And now, by Adelaide's graceful movement of departing courtesy, Bouverie, understanding she wished to proceed, was preparing to move on, when the general exclaimed—

"But remember, Bouverie, you are to dine at Marino to-day."

"Not to-day, general; it is impossible to leave one's wife every day to dine alone."

"Hey! Do you forget, young gentleman, the inspector of hospitals comes over on purpose to dine with us to-day, from Silver Hill, to learn from yourself your

plan of improving the comforts of the convalescent ward at Bexhill?"

"Pshaw! how unlucky!" muttered Bouverie.

"Oh! Montagu," said Adelaide, "you must not resist that arbitrary call of duty."

Bouverie now promised, though reluctantly, to attend; and felt so charmed with his wife through this whole scene of introduction, that the moment he believed himself out of the observation of the general and his retreating troop, and that the groom was gone before them to open a gate, he pressed her with rapture to his bosom, as he exclaimed—

"But I will not go to Marino one moment before dinner, though you were to come out with a thousand Oh! Montagus, as impellants to duty, Mistress Adelaide, I assure you."

Bouverie now drove on to Hastings, where he placed his lovely wife's name, with his own, on every subscription book; and Adelaide at length returned with him to her cottage, on the ethereal wings of rising hope, which whispered sweetly

through her bosom, that yet on earth she might be happy.

Adelaide's dinner was ready for her when she returned home, and Montagu sat down to table with her, that he might lure her on to eat.

"My happiness through this day," said Adelaide, gratefully smiling, as they still sat at table after her dinner, "seems to have subdued my faculties; at least my one of remembering I had business to speak to you upon, for I want some day, dear Montagu, to discuss the important business of finance with you."

"You want cash; and I will give you a draft on ——— to-morrow," replied Bouverie, in a tone that sounded not quite like one of satisfaction to the nicely discriminating ears of his astonished wife.

"No, I do not," replied Adelaide; "but I wish to talk with you upon a remuneration to the Harpers for the new abode they have surprised us with; since equity tells us our original agreement must be null and void: and I also wish you to give me my instructions relative to that part of our *yearly* expenditure which belongs to my

department. At Twickenham we were not living at our own expense; but here we are, you know. I am very new to domestic finance, and I must require your wishes and your judgment to form some boundary for me; for you would not, I presume, like to expend your whole income every year; since you would wish—if for no other purpose, to have some hundreds always at command, to yield you a horse or curricle that struck your fancy; or me a straw or feather I set my heart on; or, better yet," she added, with a beautiful smile of benevolent sweetness, "to give to suffering merit aid, or yield assistance to a friend."

Bouverie passed his hand hurryingly over his face, started from his seat, and hastening to the window, gathered a beautiful rose, which he dexterously twitched to pieces, when he resumed his seat, which he instantly did, mechanically repeating—

"Assuredly, certainly.—You are always correct, dear Adelaide."

"I wish to be so, and therefore request your instructions upon the important subject of pecuniary arrangement," said the

puzzled Adelaide, who could not believe the circumstances of her husband were embarrassed; and well she knew not one sordid particle was to be found within his composition: then what could this singular disquietude upon the subject of finance portend?

"But pray, Adelaide," said Bouverie hesitatingly, after an awkward pause, "can you remember—at all remember, within a hundred or two, of how much you drew from ——— while at Twickenham?"

"My memory will have no great exertion to make," replied Adelaide, "in answering you; since I never applied to Messrs. ——— for cash at all."

"You left bills unpaid then?"

"Oh! no, believe me. I paid them all; —remunerated Mr. Dee, and—every body; —completed my wardrobe; defrayed my journey hither; and still have sufficient left to prevent any application to you yet, out of the munificent gift my dear uncle made me to purchase my bridal finery."

"That must not, shall not be. I must reimburse your remuneration of Mr. Dee, *your* journey hither, and ten thousand

other things, my Adelaide. That gift of your uncle's was exclusively for yourself; not to be spent for me."

"Convince me," said Adelaide, with an enchanting smile of tender interest, "that what I expended for you was not for my dearer self, and then I will accept remuneration from you, Montagu."

At length Bouverie found it was time to dress for dinner at Marino; and his heart, in paradoxical emotion, seemed reluctant at quitting Adelaide, although eagerly panting to be with Lady Marian, to whom his resentment had been awakened for her slight to our heroine; although that very slight had come in flattering incense to his infatuating passion, as springing from hatred to the being she feared might rob her of his affections: and still in paradoxical feeling, Bouverie, when adonized, returned from his toilet with anxiety, to take a parting embrace from his lovely wife; and then with bounding eagerness flew into the carriage, to accelerate his reaching the dangerous presence of the fascinating Marian.

Adelaide's generosity and forbearance in

her pecuniary arrangements, had relieved the heart of her husband from an unpleasant embarrassment, which had hung about it for several days, awakened by his fears of her having drawn all the cash he had lying at his banker's; for which, the morning of the day of her arrival in Sussex, he had had a most unexpected demand.

Whilst at Malta, after one attempt, Bouverie had never dared to make the most trifling offer, in the form of any gift, beyond a natural flower, to Lady Marian; but since the resumption of their delusive dream of Platonic wooing in Sussex, she not only accepted the most costly presents, but had, under the apparent feeling of delicate reluctance, condescended to borrow several sums of money from him, until he had drawn every shilling he could demand out of his army agent's hands: the cause of such required loans assigned by her ladyship, the extrication of a beloved brother, who had disobliged his parents by an imprudent marriage, from total ruin; and for whose relief she dare not apply to the general, as they had imprudently lived *a little* too prodigally ere they had gone to

Malta; but now, by practising strict economy in Sussex, she trusted soon to relieve all their embarrassments; when she should have the pleasure of repaying him the sums she was indebted to his friendship for.

But these sums, she at length told Bouverie, with tears and lamentations, had, through her brother's mistaken delicacy in concealing the extent of his involvement, failed in his extrication from embarrassment; and that now with horror she discovered debts to the amount of nine hundred and seventy pounds were menacing his liberty; and where to procure that sum she could not tell; and she should assuredly break her heart if her beloved brother Charles's ruin, with that of his seven children, were sealed in a prison.

Bouverie was thrown, by this intelligence, into the greatest state of consternation; his whole yearly revenue from his estate amounted to no more than sixteen hundred pounds; the interest of Adelaide's fortune was too sacred even for thought to glance at upon such an occasion; he knew nothing of the ingenious devices of

ways and means; he only now could act as a married man, whose income was predestined through the year; and could only look to the sum which had been placed at his banker's for the first expenses of his wedded life, to *assist* in the extrication of his adored Marian's brother; for wholly to accomplish it from thence he considered as an impossibility, if Adelaide had drawn even half as largely as he supposed she must: but, contrary to expectation, she had not drawn at all; and he should have the rapture of presenting the whole required sum to Lady Marian, and leave sufficient to answer the domestic demands of his prudent wife, until aid from their various revenues came round.

## CHAPTER X.

WITH a draft in his pocket for this large sum, to be paid into the hands of the person her ladyship had deputed to receive the former ones for her in town, Bouverie proceeded to Marino, where he found the dinner party already assembled, and Lady Marian adorned in the most alluring style that ingenuity and art could devise, to set off her exquisite charms in the most subduing point of view; her youngest child was seated in her lap; and she looked pale and dejected, whilst her heaving bosom betrayed disquietude within.

Lady Marian could look pale, or blooming, at pleasure; but her dejection and mental inquietude were inartificial; for she had found, that her slight to Adelaide had power to offend Bouverie: she had heard too, from all the gentlemen who had met her in the morning, of her exquisite beauty, and fascinations of voice and manner: she had herself seen Bouverie smile delight-

edly upon her; had heard of his rapturous embrace, from Captain Thornley, who, standing in his stirrups to gaze after Adelaide, chanced to witness; and her bosom was filled with the most bitter pangs of jealous anguish; since her reprehensible passion for Bouverie was not a feigned one.

Lady Marian, the youngest and most beautiful of the Earl of Ixworth's daughters, received her education upon the continent, for the purpose of doing every justice to the superior talents she early evinced; and she returned to England, at the age of sixteen, perfected in every showy accomplishment to that preeminence her parents had expected; but an adept in more than their wishes panted for; since she returned to them a most finished flirt, whose ruling passion was universal conquest; and gifted as she was with power of attracting, she was not slow in obtaining this anxiouly sought for incense to her vanity; and with an imagination fertile, art infinite, and the talent of conciliating almost magical, she was at no loss to carry on her numerous flirtations, unsus-

pected by her parents: and so wide and diversified was this early range of vanity's delights, that she had entangled old and young, high and low, rich and poor, in her toils, ere her age for presentation arrived; so that assignations, signals, love-letters, and the glances of encouragement, or the forbidding frowns of waning partiality,—were as familiar to this early votary of the blind deity, as how to receive the homage of admiration, openly addressed to her in the presence of her parents.

But the success of her deceptions at length rendered her careless; and she was detected in her assignations with a strolling player, and instantly sent, by her enraged father, an exile into Wales, under the care of her grandmother; from whom, in a few weeks, she contrived to elope with Captain Harley, a recruiting officer in the neighbourhood; who, possessing more honour than she did prudence, carried her to Scotland, and made her his wife; and from the hour of her marriage her thirst for universal conquest still continued unsubdued, but with far more culpability; and in the practice of the same system of

art and deception she deceived her parents by, she contrived to hoodwink her husband, and gull him into a belief of her immaculacy, and her ardent affection for him; and that her adoption of the Italian custom of cicisbeoism, was carried on by her in perfect innocence.

With Bouverie she became almost instantaneously enamoured; but soon, through her divining arts, she had the misery to develop, that his heart, if not devoted to the Adelaide he was incessantly raving of, was panting to become so; and that, as a Christian and a man of honour, he recoiled from an attachment to the wife of another, as a crime: but these formidable obstacles seemed only to give new zest to her passion and her ingenuity; and by the most refined arts, under the subtle auspices of his surprised vanity, Machiavelianly exalting herself to the highest altitude of immaculate purity in his venerating imagination, at length but too completely succeeded.

But, when at Malta, she lured on her prey to a forgetfulness of the sublimity of her purity, more deeply to impress upon *his* gratitude the immensity of the debt she

meant it should owe her, by the extreme altitude of the pinnacle his allurements had caused her fall from, she assumed the innovating character of Lucretia; when he, in firm conviction of the sincerity of her displeasure, obeyed her stern mandate; and her ladyship, enraged at his simplicity in obeying her, found indignation exclude from her bosom every feeling of pity for him during his illness; which she learned, though most severe, was not considered dangerous; and led her at length to prepare a punishment adequate to his transgressions, against his convalescence, by raising up an apparent rival, to dismay him.

This rival was Lord Rochdale, who had not the smallest objection to commencing her ladyship's cicisbeo; but not so disinterested a one as Montagu had been; for he would not yield her up his heart, and yet expected every concession from her; and with arts equal to her own he succeeded in drawing her into such entanglement with him, that when Bouverie wrote his letter, announcing his intention of obeying her commands, by his speedy return to England, unless she revoked her mandate, she

was most happy to send him out of the way of making observations derogative to the exalted opinion he had formed of her; an opinion she had penetration sufficient to develop, gave her the firm hold she acquired over his affections; and predetermined, herself, the first favourable opportunity to follow him to England, to unite herself for ever to him.

And most speedily was that projected return facilitated. General Harley, exceedingly inebriated after a public dinner, fell as he entered his chamber; and, stunned by the fall, continued insensible for some moments: a suspension of faculty which Lady Marian chose to have considered an apoplexy; and the principal surgeon called into attendance, fascinated by her ladyship's arts, said all that she desired him.

The general, in consequence, was readily persuaded to give up his advantageous appointment in India, whither he had vehemently sworn he never would go, unaccompanied by his adoring Marian.

This Machiavelian woman had, in her artfully managed career of cicisbeoism, contrived to establish such interest for her-

elf in the political world, that she had nly to speak her wishes, to have them ealized: the moment, therefore, the ge- eral assented to relinquish his appoint- nent in India, she wrote home to have an mployment of emolument arranged for he general, against his return to England; vhither she no longer felt an apprehension t returning; since letters had arrived for Montagu, directed to the Earl of De More- and; and therefore assured he was come nto that title, with its concomitant posses- ions, felt conviction he would supply her vith means to clear off innumerable debts he had left unpaid in England, unsuspect- ed by her husband; whose cash, instead of defraying the expenses of his family, as ie supposed it did, had been devoted in fees to silence confidents; and bribes to those agents her pursuits in the path of in- famy required.

But scarcely had Lady Marian landed at Plymouth, in eagerly exploring the news- papers she most unexpectedly learned the marriage of the magnet who had drawn ier to England, as Major Bouverie still, and to that very Adelaide she had always

cherished such a presaging horror of. Her passions being of the most active formation, effects from disappointment, and other rubs of life, generally operated in her mind like the turbulent jar of angry elements; and now she raged and foamed with little less than phrensy, at Bouverie's dereliction of her; until her vindictive spirit, thirsting for vengeance upon Adelaide, arose to hush the furious storm; flattering her with the eagerly clung-to hope, of luring the man she loved from her hated rival; and without once reflecting, that, by the adoption of this plan of love and revenge, she must ultimately sacrifice her own place in society, without the possibility of becoming the wife of the man she so reprehensibly adored, who had raised an insuperable barrier to that premeditated union, which had deluded her mind during her tedious voyage from Malta.

Fleet as the eagle soaring after prey, Lady Marian hastened to London, where her restored picture, with the letter of solemn adieu from Montagu, awaited her; when, wild with new zest to commence her invasion of the domestic retreat he had

found, where peace and happiness were sweetly promised him, excusing her own absence from her home by a plausible tale of a dying friend, whose couch she must visit; while to Richmond she bent her course, with her long tried faithful confident, Coleman; and commenced her operations, in the retaking of Bouverie's heart by the powerful assault of her vocal magic.

When assured her prey was actually gone to Bexhill, she flew on the pinions of mischief into Sussex, where her spells too soon found their influence over the heart of Bouverie; yet not without many a painful thrill of lingering remembrance clinging to the charms and virtues of his lovely bride; and her ladyship having heard of the unsubdued and ardent passion of the Duke of St. Kilda for her hated rival, she looked to his grace as a potent auxiliary to the promotion of her future happiness with Montagu; and determined to act her Platonic part a little longer, in the belief, inspired by her own feelings on the subject, that a neglected wife could never withstand the allurements of a persevering lover; and that Adelaide's inevitable tres-

pass would make way for her as the wife of Bouverie, after the death of General Harley.

When Montagu entered the drawing-room at Marino, and beheld the interesting dejection of his infatuator, he hastened, wild with alarm, to the seat beside her—

"My soul's idol! he softly articulated, "what can have thus depressed you?"

Averted from others, she raised her eyes, beaming with expression suited to her purpose, as in a tone of thrilling sorrow she replied, "I have offended you, through your idol wife: let this dear babe plead for me—I could not, could not bear the risk of losing him."

Dinner was at this moment announced, and they adjourned to it. Lady Marian was spiritless, abstracted, inattentive to her guests; partook not of the repast; and pleaded her excuse through having fatigued herself by too long a walk in the zenith of the sun's power.

When the business of eating was terminated, and that the briskly circulating bottle gave full flow to the general's volubility, he shouted to Bouverie, who always

sat at their table by the side of Lady Marian, to spare her the fatigue of carving:

"Montagu, my youngster! what a beautiful child you have married! Why, in despite of that ethereal thing she wore to hide her roseate blushes, I scanned her well; and never beheld any thing at all like her before, excepting those young angels I have seen of the ancient masters in Italy."

"Oh general!" cried the volatile Thornley, "you are too sublime for me. I only paced the regions of sylphs or houris, to seek the spot of Mrs. Bouverie's nativity."

"I would, even against conviction, rather lower her from the spheres to the class of mortal women," said Colonel Lonsdale—"of unmarried mortal women; for then, no power on earth—no, not twenty of my rival swords, should deter me from entering the lists of her suitors."

"Really," said Major Gayville, willing to qualify a little, for Lady Marian, all this unpalatable praise of our heroine—"Really, Colonel Bouverie, your wife is a pretty looking child, who gives fair promise of much *agrements*, when her mind and manners become formed."

"They are formed, sir!—to fascinating perfection formed!" retorted Bouverie, with the fire of indignant pride, wounded for Adelaide, flashing from his eyes; totally forgetful of where he then was, or whose hand was most emphatically clasping his.

The hand was with nervous precipitance withdrawn; and the very first fair opportunity, Lady Marian and her female friends retreated from the dining-room.

Vain was every effort the impatient Montagu made to follow his anxiously expecting Marian, until he explained to the hospital inspector, in the most circumstantial manner, every iota relative to his plan for amending the accommodation of the sick in the hospital.

But at length Bouverie effected his escape to the now little less than phrensied Marian; who promptly smoothed her ruffled brow at his approach, to the more alluring one of meek resignation, combatting with despair; when sweetly, plausibly, and pathetically, she hastened to extenuate her slight to Adelaide through her maternal apprehensions.

She next proceeded to portray, in all the alluring colours of her magic eloquence, the efforts she had been making, with all the energies of her rectitude and reason, since her direful anguish of beholding his enraptured smile at his wife that morning, to form the resolution of leaving him fully to this growing passion for his new idol, but had found her heart must burst in the attempt; and she was in consequence reduced to the humiliation of imploring him, by every feeling of humanity, to conceal from her,—as long as her breaking heart permitted her now wretched existence to extend,—this growing flame for her happy happy rival.

And so well did she succeed in every spell she assailed him by, that three o'clock arrived ere he could find power to tear himself from her fascinations; and then, bound to return to her enchantments in a very few hours, to attend her on a large gay party, formed by her in the wisdom of her love policy, to visit the bleeding rock on the east of Hastings.

Bouverie found his hapless wife buried in the semblance of a deep slumber; and

from whom he stole away, with cautious footsteps, early in the morning, ere her senses, fatigued with woe and watching, permitted her faculties to unclose from sleep; and who, when she descended to breakfast, instead of her husband there to cheer her drooping hope of earthly happiness, found a note of apology awaiting her for his early absence, through an unavoidable engagement formed ere her arrival, to attend a party upon an excursion.

The excuse was plausible, and Adelaide endeavoured to be satisfied with it; since she could not, no, she could not wish Montagu to break through any forms of urbanity for her: so thus our poor heroine, in the morn of life, by nature lively as innocence, health, and animated spirits could make her, was left to the sole society of her nurse, to seek out her own amusements; and, from the great resources of her own highly cultivated mind, she could have found it for every hour in the day, without *ennui*, had her mind been happy; but the blight of peace proved the canker of enjoyment; and though she employed *herself*, yet care allured her thoughts too

often to itself, and led her to the frequently repeated question, with terror repeated question, of "Where will this fatal attachment end?"

Yet to withdraw her husband from the spells of Marian she felt incompetent—To speak to him upon the subject, she believed as injudicious as she should find it impossible; and to giving her cause to the intercession of friends—if friends had power even over human passions—she recoiled from; since to what being would she utter plaints of Montagu? no, not even in her prayers: and the thought of seeing friends now made her tremble, lest observation might lead them to inquiry, which it would pose her ingenuousness to parry; but most of all she dreaded the fond paternal scrutinizing eye of her beloved guardian; tracing, through every line of her anguished countenance, griefs which he would shudder to develop, and which she would sooner lose existence than disclose.

Adelaide believing the sea breezes, by benefiting her strength, would aid her mental faculties in sustaining the direful load they seemed destined to endure, or-

dered her carriage in the evening; and, accompanied by Obearn, and the delighted little Hal, and attended by Dennis, proceeded in it to the beach; and as it was low water when she arrived there, she, with her companions, commenced a salubrious ramble along the sands.

Not more than a quarter of an hour had Adelaide walked these sands, when the Duke of St. Kilda, (who had on horseback been sauntering on the beach like one forlorn, since his early retreat from the mess-room after dinner,) promptly ascertaining who formed one of the pedestrian party he beheld, bounded from his horse, and giving the bridle to Dennis, suddenly presented himself with an extended hand of palsied agitation, before the startled Adelaide; who, although distressed and disconcerted at this encounter, yet could not, without the affectation of fastidious prudery, refuse to give a hand which amity seemed so cordially to demand.

"Mrs. Bouverie," his grace exclaimed, in tremulous accents, "you are almost the last person in existence I expected to meet *with* here. I thought you were gone with

a gay, a happy party, to the bleeding rock, and came hither, in solitary sadness, to figure to my now gloomy fancy a bleeding rock in every one around me. But, but, since I last saw you, two events have occurred to call forth my congratulations. Upon one I cannot, for the life of me, be hypocrite enough to offer them :—upon the other—your perfect recovery, your fortunate escape, in every way, from a dangerous malady, I do most sincerely, from the bottom of my soul."

Adelaide made her acknowledgments with an air of embarrassment which her thus meeting him inspired; and which the tone and melancholy look of hopelessness with which he addressed her, were not likely to remove.

"Why were you not on this party, may I ask?" demanded the duke, endeavouring to abstract his thoughts from his futile wishes.

"Lady Marian Harley and Mrs. Gayville are still apprehensive of my conveying infection to their children," she replied; and, wishing to change the subject to an unembarrassing one to her, added, "Can

your grace tell me when Lady Longuiville returns hither?"

"Not this month, I fear."

"Alas!" responded Adelaide—"but I could scarcely expect her sooner: however, when she does come, I shall not be the recluse I now am for lack of female society, whom fear teaches not to shun me; and *then* Colonel Bouverie and myself will be most happy to receive the Duke of St. Kilda in our little cottage amongst our most respected guests."

His grace now bent his ardent gaze on Adelaide, as a groan-clad sigh burst from the centre of his heart; while he seemed for a moment to forget the ceremony of a bow at least was necessary for her *politesse;* but he did recover himself, made his profound homage, and promptly perceiving whither her steps were leading her, (as the moment he had joined her she turned them towards her carriage), he eagerly inquired for Falkland.

"There have been no letters from him, at least none that I know of, since those you had the goodness to announce to me; *but* I think we have good reason shortly

to expect him home. Mrs. Falkland is still in Scotland, admiring the beauties of your grace's country."

"Oh, forgive me! if I answer you I care not where she is; since I feel a hatred —perhaps an unjust one—to her; as if she had caused the destruction of my happiness.—Possibly it might have availed me nothing, had I adopted other measures than those she prescribed to me; yet still it seems like comfort to my misery to think that but for her I might not have been undone."

Adelaide, with a heart bleeding in sympathetic pity for disappointed love, yet recoiled from the impropriety of such allusions; and unable, through bashfulness, to enter upon the discussion of so delicate a subject with him herself, now quickened her pace still more perceptibly, as she gently said—

"When Lady Longuiville arrives, I will commission her to obtain for poor Mrs. Falkland a reinstatement in your grace's favour."

"Oh Adelaide!—for still you are Adelaide Bouverie, and I can delude my

wretchedness by calling you so," he exclaimed;—" you then insinuate that Mrs. Falkland had no share in my undoing; and that even had I earlier offered you myself, you would not have been mine. Oh! tell me, candidly tell me, is it indeed so?"

" Why force me, duke, to ungracious, painful truths?" replied the distressed, the agitated Adelaide: " but you ask me for candour; and ingenuously I tell you, that under the delusive form of sisterly affection, my heart imbibed a tender attachment to Montagu Bouverie, that can cease only with my existence, long, long before my unfortunate introduction to your grace at Seaview, and long, long ere I was aware of it.—After this acknowledgment, duke, you will of course remember, that any allusion to what, believe me, I must ever sensibly deplore, can only in future be heard by me with pain as a woman, not wholly devoid of pity; and with resentment, as the infringement of propriety to a wife."

She now had reached her carriage; the duke took her hand with his tremulous grief chilled one.

" Forgive this ardent pressure, Adelaide,"

he whispered, "since it shall be my last trespass.—I will respect your exalted, your sublimated virtue; but do not, do not you despise my perseverance in my misery."

Adelaide now entered her carriage; and Obearn with Hal, who had been following at a respectful distance, took their places. The carriage moved on; and the duke, remounting his gentle steed, rode pensively homeward, more enamoured, if that was possible, than before, determined never again to offend the sublimated delicacy of the adored of his heart; whom, too, he determined to idolize most perseveringly, now soaring into the delusive regions of hope, in the infatuation of his rival to her, he in firm conviction termed the infamous Lady Marian; leading at length the forsaken wife, the transcendently lovely formed and minded Adelaide, by the laws of his own country, ultimately to be his own.

The heart of our heroine was too susceptible of pity's tenderest sympathies, not feelingly to mourn the cherished misery, of her inflicting, in the bosom of the Duke of St. Kilda; but still it was too firmly the seat of purity, not greatly to censure his

breathing forth allusions too unequivocal to be misinterpreted, of his unsubdued passion to the now sacred ear of the wife of another.

## CHAPTER XI.

Not until the clock had chimed the hour of two, did Bouverie return to that home the love-lorn Duke of St. Kilda would have given his all for; and in the breakfast room, on the morrow, again awaited Adelaide, instead of her husband, a note to excuse his absence, through a chain of long since formed engagements to visit a round of places in the neighbourhood having commenced; and which that day was leading him to the fish ponds belonging to Mr. M—— of Hastings.

Those who are acquainted with the vicinity of Hastings must know the bleeding rock, the fish ponds, and the lover's seat, are so convenient in proximity, that one excursion would suffice for viewing all; but that would not have answered Lady Marian's purpose of lengthening out her chain to bind the infatuated Bouverie to her presence; therefore, with much ingenuity she arranged her plans, for days after days, to visit every real or supposed point

of attraction in the neighbourhood; doubting not her collations given on each occasion, *en militaire*, in tented habitation, would collect a sufficient number of gay spirits to attend her parties, to gift them with animated existence as long as she should find them necessary auxiliaries in the separation of her prey from his alarming wife.

We will not sadden our sympathizing readers, by leading them to follow the heart-rived Adelaide through her hours of misery, in which she sedulously sought the antidote of employment; but only from her piety could she derive a balm that left effect behind it.

As the mornings now were sultry, and the evenings long, and invitingly salubrious, Adelaide deferred to the latter period her time for taking exercise; and now fearing to walk out of her own premises, lest she should encounter the Duke of St. Kilda, she determined upon another excursion in her carriage; but up the country, far deviating from the sea-shore or Bexhill.

Adelaide had gone about three miles of

cross roads, according to the directions given by farmer Harper to her coachman, of a safe and pleasant way; when the coachman, losing the clew of his instructions, became involved in perplexity; and, in aiming to extricate himself, without the humiliation of acknowledging to Dennis he had lost his way, had got about half way down a sharp declivity in a field, when he discovered the ground was becoming unsound; yet in the spot he was in he feared to turn; and still as much he apprehended to go on; and, as he stopped in dismayed indecision, he suddenly beheld an officer of his master's regiment saundering on horseback in a field below; when he promptly called out, with the voice of a Stentor, which providentially he possessed, "Hillo, your honour! is the bottom safe for the carriage to go down?" and first announced to those he drove that any danger menaced them.

Instantly the officer leaped an intervening gate, and motioning to the coachman to continue stationary, attempted to gallop towards him; but that effort was vain; for the unsound and slippery turf destroyed

his power of assimulating his speed to his wishes, and only by a cautious walk could he make any way at all.

"Attempt not to move," he cried, the moment there was a chance of his being heard; and, to the infinite dismay of Adelaide, she discovered this coming champion to be the Duke of St. Kilda.

As his grace now continued to mount the acclivity, and the ground became less quaggy, he accelerated his speed until he came up to the breasts of the carriage horses; when hastily demanding, Was the coachman sure the horses would obey the curb rein whilst Mrs. Bouverie alighted? ere he could be answered, he saw himself there was no security of it, from the efforts the poor animals were making to find a solid footing.

Promptly the terrorized duke placed himself and charger at the horses' heads, to impede their advance; whilst the trembling Dennis, raving like a maniac, in dismay for the *darlingt* and Norah, took them, with their young companion Hal, out of the carriage.

That anxious measure accomplished, the

courage of the peer and poor Dennis felt instant renovation; and with a wonderfully steadied voice, his grace ordered the coachman to take the horses out of the carriage, and to proceed upon one of them to some peasants at work in an approximate field carrying timber, to summon their assistance, and borrow their ropes to harness the horses to the back of the carriage, as only that way could it be extricated.

"Faith then, your honour," said Dennis, "if the carriage can't be turned ere it quits this field, 'tis backwards we must be getting onwards for the next two miles; since sorrow turn can we turn until we get into the pink clover-field *forenent* the big hop ground: so what will we do with the jewel my mistress, and Norah Obearn, and that fairy hunter who screeched well nigh to drive the cattle mad?"

By this time his grace's groom arrived; since, caring more for the safety of his horse's knees, than of succouring the individuals in distress, he had been completely distanced by his lord; who now resigning his steed to the groom's care, hastened to the side of Adelaide, who could not, without the most

monstrous rudeness and affected fastidiousness, fly from the approach of his grace, after his kind and important services.

The farmer to whom this field belonged now arrived, half breathless with speed, from a height, where in dismay he had beheld the impending peril; and now informed them, "Had the carriage proceeded six yards further, nothing could have prevented its overturn, and precipitation down the steep at the side, when every life must have been sacrificed."

The duke, again transformed into a coward, stood pale and trembling with dismay at the destruction which Adelaide had but just escaped; while she, in whose heart was glowing gratitude to Heaven for its mercy, and to the duke for his aid, still found a thought awake to the danger which yet encompassed her, that of giving food for Lady Marian's misrepresentations; and with eagerness demanded from the farmer, "Could the carriage be turned with safety?"

"Not with possibility, until it entered the clover-field which Dennis had mentioned."

"Then how was she to get home to Castle Cottage?"

"The way was straight forward, by an excellent path through beautiful hop grounds, not more than two miles, although the cart road by which she came was full four," the farmer said; and further advised her, "to proceed that way; since, in going to the clover-field to await her carriage, she must wade above her ancles through water."

Adelaide had no alternative: but to his grace walking with her she hesitated to accede.

"If you forget my solemn promise, Mrs. Bouverie, I do not," said the duke; "and Colonel Bouverie would execrate me with reason, did I not protect you home. Surely he would do so by my sisters, did he find them in a similar situation."

Adelaide now gave her purse to Dennis, to remunerate those who assisted in the extrication of the carriage; and his grace ordered his groom to remain and give his aid, and then to bring the horses to Colonel Bouverie's, where he should wait for them; and the heart of our heroine trem-

bled in alarm at this intelligence: yet she knew not how this distressing sojourn was to be avoided, without the most flagrant inhospitality and ingratitude on her part: —without betraying a distrust of her own prudence, and, worse still, without betraying a fear of awakening the displeasure of her husband. All, therefore, she had the power of doing in this dilemma was, instead of walking home with all the speed humanity to the child would admit of, to proceed most leisurely, that the horses might arrive before them, and prevent the necessity of inviting his grace to enter her dwelling.

At length, in slow pedestrian measure, they reached the cottage ere the arrival of his grace's horses; and the distressed Adelaide found the duke's remaining her guest, until they came, inevitable:—her tea, too, was most provokingly laid in readiness; and, after all his fraternal kindness to her, she could not in possibility avoid now offering him some.

The Duke of St. Kilda was amazed at the beauty of Adelaide's cottage, as he had heard it discussed with unqualified

indignation at Bexhill, Bouverie's permitting Lady Marian to take the most disgustingly wretched habitation in the whole neighbourhood for his lovely wife; nay, his very bride, with whom he had obtained so fine a fortune, independent of her future expectations.

His grace inquired, "What incantation she had practised, to transform a place of reported horror into fairy land?"

"A little active cleanliness, a little ingenuity, a few fair words to the genii of the place, and a few kind deeds to an infant magician, formed the ingredients of my spell," Adelaide replied, with a smile.

The duke responded not but by the expressive language of his eyes; and, as on Adelaide he gazed, his heart repeated—

"Oh! treasure of every transcendent excellence, how art thou sacrificed!—Oh! how in St. Kilda's Castle should I adore, as you adorned each domestic scene for me!"

"To morrow," said his grace, as they were taking tea, "I find Lady Marian leads her party to Old Roar; next day an unlucky review of the whole line intervenes; but the next day she pitches her

tent of attraction at the lover's seat; and the next is to be devoted to a marine expedition to Pevensey Castle."

"Not, duke, to Old Roar to-morrow!" exclaimed Adelaide in a tone of alarm; "to-morrow will be Sunday!"

"I am perfectly correct; my card of invitation specified it."

Adelaide sighed deeply, and tears trembled in her eyes; since Montagu, from circumstances, had never accompanied her to church since their union: she had therefore hoped even Lady Marian's influence would not prevent his performance of a sacred duty with her on the morrow; from which she had flattered herself that the piety of his heart might take alarm at the direful precipice he had wandered to the verge of.

His grace now gazed on Adelaide in the air-clad fancies of his hopes, as Bouverie's substitute, walking through life's Elysium of her creating, until disturbed from his vision of delight by the removal of the tea equipage by Obearn; when awakened to the misery of conviction that Adelaide was not his, and was probably too deli-

cately minded ever to be so, even on his own hope-formed project, he started from his seat into the portico; where, leaning against a pillar of the structure, he endeavoured to remand his firmness to its post, but in vain; his throbbing heart, his beating temples, his scalding tears, struggling for a passage, proclaimed, that to stay longer in the presence of Adelaide, and not betray his wretchedness, was impossible; and to betray it, would be at once to forfeit the esteem of this too fascinating child of purity: yet still alive to his hope's most fondly cherished project, he believed a retreat, under his present not to be vanquished feelings, might make a favourable impression on her pitying sensibility: he therefore, impelled by the commingling of necessity and design, suddenly darted back into the room, snatched up his cap; and in a voice tremulous from emotion, yet not inattentive to the tone of unsubdued tenderness assimulating with his feelings, he hesitatingly articulated—

"Mrs. Bouverie, I—I—My horses must be near. Something has subdued me: you will therefore have the goodness to excuse

the abruptness of my departure; since you must see—must feel conviction of its being necessary, to bring me to myself."

At this moment the horses were announced; and Adelaide rejoiced they were so; since it spared any animadversion upon the singularity of the duke's hurrying away before they arrived.

But how comparatively light would have been the heart of the Duke of St. Kilda, had he known that tears strayed down the cheeks of the pitying Adelaide, on viewing the conflict of his hopeless love: but, after some most painful moments of sympathizing commiseration, her thoughts concentrated in all the evil likely to occur to her, through misrepresentation of her late interviews with the Duke of St. Kilda; and, after much uneasy reflexion upon the subject, she determined to adopt Bouverie's own method, of writing; as probably the only one allowed her of anticipating malicious information.

Prefaced by an apology for writing, in the too probable event of his present engagements not allowing her to speak to *him* upon a subject she could not rest

satisfied with herself until she had informed him of, Adelaide related to her husband the plain unvarnished facts of her two embarrassing evening adventures; suppressing only the ebullitions of the duke's unfortunate passion.

Adelaide's note being the offspring of unembellished truth, was soon written; but, when it was so, she felt most unexpectedly puzzled upon a method for its delivery; since she felt, that beside being so mortifying to convey it through a domestic to her husband, it might lead to a suspicion of some mysterious disunion existing between them; so that at length she determined to leave it on her dressing-table, to the chance of Montagu's finding it when he stopped there, as with grief she had seen him do the two preceding nights the moment he entered the room, out of the observation of Lee, when, believing her buried in profound repose, unfasten a picture or locket from around his neck, put it in a red leathern case, and place it in his pocket.

The dawning morn found the waking Adelaide keeping her sorrow's vigil ere her

truant husband returned to his home. With the light tread of caution, fearing to disturb her, he at length entered her chamber; and in the expected manœuvre of taking the houri portrait of Lady Marian from his bosom, which she had given to him the evening she sealed her peace for her slight to his wife, by effecting deeper power over his mind, he, as she hoped, observed her note.

Conscience smitten, Bouverie shuddered at beholding an address from Adelaide alarmingly awaiting him: but now, seduced almost from every right propensity by the blandishments of Lady Marian, he felt indignation mingled with his alarm; and for a moment the siren Marian's influence led him to determine not to condescend to open this note: however, at length some better feelings pleading Adelaide's cause, he broke the seal, when the commencing lines of apology promptly made her peace, although they teemed with a reproach the gentle writer had not intended; and as he further read, her varied excellence so burst upon him in all its striking sublimity, and his own misconduct in such a dark array of contrast, that, unable to suppress his

emotion, he flew back to his dressing-room; there, by the most powerful efforts of his firmness, to tranquillize his feelings sufficiently for not disturbing the repose of his inestimable wife; leaving her in a state of terror not to be portrayed, lest she had awakened jealousy or anger where she wished to convey conviction there existed no cause for either.

But when at length Bouverie, composed in aspect, re-entered with the cautious step of gentle kindness, and closed a coming sunbeam out that would soon have played upon her face, her fears were happily allayed; and soon, from the extreme fatigue of long watching, she fell into that profound slumber she so well had counterfeited.

Not so Bouverie; the conflict of his warring passions kept him waking; and when Lee, according to orders, came to arouse him, he found him just entering his dressing-room; and this old domestic soon commenced his information of the imminent peril his mistress had been in the preceding evening; describing every circumstance, as related to him by Dennis and

the penitent coachman; until he almost chilled his master's passion for Lady Marian, by horror and dismay's icy creep through his heart, on learning thus minutely the peril which had encompassed his wife, neglected by him, and left to the mercy and protection of others.

From a train of painful thoughts, awakened by the circumstantial Lee, Bouverie was led to a second perusal of Adelaide's letter; that second produced a third; and that third a fourth; until, wound up into enthusiastic admiration of her purity and refinement in sense and sentiment, he determined, ere he should seek the now only life-giving presence of his Marian, as a just tribute to Adelaide's delicacy and prudence, to call on the Duke of St. Kilda, to express his gratitude; which he felt, in very truth, ebulliating from his heart, for his aid in the preservation of his angelic wife.

The moment Montagu was dressed, he descended to the suite of rooms below, which Adelaide had beautified; where he examined every proof of her taste, her information, and her accomplishments;

which the books that lay there, and other testimonials, bore witness to: and as he scrutinized in admiration, he sighed in remorse and sorrow, that a being so gifted was so sacrificed, and led to that sacrifice by him.

From these rooms Bouverie wandered into the now completed portico; where new admiration and new griefs assailed him. The little pleasure-ground before the windows next attracted his amazement; where the magic of neatness, and skilful arrangement of long neglected masses of sweets and beauties, had converted all into an epitome of Elysium.

"And this creature of universal excellence is mine, and I neglect her;—have given that affection, I plighted to her at the altar of my Creator, to another; and that other, in what does she exceed my wife?" said Bouverie mentally—"In what lies the spell, the enchantment? Not in youth, for there Adelaide holds considerable advantage;—not in superior beauty; in temper; benevolence; no, nor in piety; for, even apostate as I am, I must confess in all these that Adelaide surpasses all of

human kind I ever met with. Is it then in information?—No.—Adelaide's is more profound, more universal, than Marian's.—In accomplishments?—In drawing and dancing certainly not; but in music I may venture to adjudge the palm to Marian, although Adelaide I have not heard; but Marian's voice and science are perfection. In brilliancy of wit, too, Adelaide is certainly inferior; and in those nameless fascinations that lead the passions captive, and steal the senses from the guidance of reason; there, there Adelaide fails, from the actual transcendency of her nature: yet still, within Diana's pale can these resistless spells be practised; for, even in chastity's exaltation, I question if my immaculate Adelaide can in equity stand as the competitor of Marian; since the sterling sublimity of Adelaide's purity of heart is stamped with a celestial impression so distinguishable, that nothing in the form of libertinism could be found so daring to assail it; while Marian's invincible virtue is the victory of the soul over the frailty of the mortal."

Bouverie thus soliloquizing, wandered

from spot to spot of this enchantingly transformed little domain, totally lost to the recollection of having ordered his curricle to be in readiness at eight o'clock, to take him to Marino; and at length he found himself at the gate of entrance into the cottage grounds; where he encountered two little boys, both so prepossessing in aspect, he could not resist the impulse of entering into converse with them; which ended in conveying to his ears, through their undisguised information, a most beautiful and affecting anecdote of his wife's active benevolence to their family, bowed down by sickness, sorrow, and adversity; and that then they were on their way to the cottage of their benefactress, for broth for their yet sick granny.

Bouverie gave to each child a proof of his benevolence to take home to their parents; and then with rapid steps made his fleet way to the portico, where the rattling of his military accoutrements announced his approach to Adelaide, who hastily chased away her rising tears, at being thus every day left to a solitary breakfast.

Bouverie entered, and Adelaide beamed an ineffably sweet smile of cordial welcome; sending promptly back to her bursting heart the tenderness that would fain have formed its most eloquent expression; fearing it might only awaken disgust where it was no longer prized.

"Adelaide!" said Bouverie, in a voice so allied to tenderness, it led her joy dilating heart almost to bound from its throbbing station, "will you give me some breakfast to-day?"

"Assuredly, Montagu. I thought you were gone;—obliged to go; or it should have been prepared for you."

And now Adelaide arose to ring for necessary additions to the tea equipage; when Bouverie, enchanted by a sweetness of reception his conscience proclaimed he merited not, snatched her to his bosom; and as he tenderly pressed her to it, congratulated her upon her providential escape from inevitable destruction; and expressed, in the most feeling terms, his gratitude to Heaven and the Duke of St. Kilda, for her being spared to him.

At length, when this innovating burst

of Bouverie's tenderness for his wife permitted her to summon Dennis, he informed his master the curricle had been waiting a full hour at the door, while Lee had been unsuccessfully searching for him.

"Let it put up then for another hour," said Bouverie, "for even then I shall be in good time for our chaplain's performance of service at Bexhill."

Adelaide's blush and sigh of disappointed hope were not lost on Montagu; who, divining their cause, and without one good excuse to offer for thus neglecting an essential duty, hastily strove to call her thoughts to other themes.

At length the fleeter Time informed the lingering Bouverie he must go, or he would be too late for every engagement of the day, as well as that of breakfast, from which he had so wilfully played truant; but not so voluntarily did he depart; for in paradoxical emotion he found reluctance at his heart, when he bade adieu to Adelaide.

## CHAPTER XII.

Accompanied by Obearn, and attended by Dennis, our pensive heroine walked to the parish church, which was beautifully sequestered in a romantic wood, that admitted no carriage within several paces of its consecrated ground; where, when she entered, besides the little troop of farmers and peasants who were obeying the summons of the sacred knell, she beheld a large party of *haut-ton*, attended by innumerable servants in splendid liveries, approaching the great door of the church; and immediately she hastened her entrance through a nearer one, that her accommodation with a pew might be effected ere their arrival.

Adelaide, and, at her desire, Obearn, were quickly placed in Castle Cottage pew: and as she proceeded to it, she might have plainly read in the amazed stare of the clergyman, who was standing in the desk, the query of—"What! do you come to church?" had her eyes been directed to-

wards him: and when service commenced, had not her thoughts been occupied by what she entered that sacred place to perform, she must have perceived that she engrossed much of the fixed attention of the large party she had seen enter the churchyard, which was composed of the Earl and Countess of Melcombe, their eight daughters and two sons, with some temporary inmates of Melcombe Park.

Leisurely Adelaide measured her way homewards, as the day was sultry; when, as she was about to cross a lane to get into her own grounds, she beheld a woman, shabbily dressed, yet in a style above the common rank, extended on a bank; a very young infant lying on her arm, crying piteously, yet receiving no attention from her.

Adelaide flew to the infant, to give that her aid; and Obearn to the woman, to awake her; when, to the dismay of both, they believed, from the ghastly hue which rested on the woman's countenance, that death had closed her eyes for ever: but a moment's investigation relieved them from that apprehension; when, with the huma-

nity which ever glowed in the heart of Adelaide, she had this fainting traveller removed by Dennis, and some men returning from church, into her cottage, where every assistance was promptly and effectually given, to recall her to sensibility; when, to the horror of the pitying Adelaide, she learned it was want of sustenance that had overpowered her, as she was endeavouring, while smarting under the pangs of bitter disappointment, to recover her lost way to Hastings, to commence a mendicant walk to London: but how direfully did the horror and commiseration of our benevolent heroine increase, when, led on by her soothing kindness, the woman, who was not more than twenty, and who bore upon her pallid, grief-worn countenance, the wreck of uncommon beauty, confided to her every particular of her hapless story; which, for the sake of brevity, we will ourselves relate.

"This unfortunate young woman had been the only child of a lieutenant-colonel in his Majesty's service; who had left her, at his death, with a fortune of ten thousand pounds, to the guardianship of Gene-

ral Harley: but, ere she attained her fifteenth year, by the failure of the country bank where her guardian had placed her fortune, she lost her all; when having a most enchanting voice, highly cultivated, Lady Marian judged it politic to exhibit her at one of the theatres in London, as a singer; for the purpose of obtaining, by her beauty, an eligible establishment, either honourably, or the reverse, as fate should ordain.

"And the fate of the beautifully attractive Clara ordained the serious and honourable captivation of Lady Marian's own youngest brother, who was just completing his studies at Oxford, and had taken Deacon's orders, preparatory to his entering upon great church preferment, in his father's gift.

"Lord Ixworth was not slow in hearing of the attentions of his son Charles to this beautiful siren; and, while in town, he frequently bantered him upon an attachment so ill according with his profession: but when, after the regular publishing of banns in her *parish* church, Clara became most *lawfully entitled* to the name of wife, and,

as privately as their marriage had been effected, accompanied her husband to Oxford, Lord Ixworth obtaining intelligence of her being with his son, and conceiving her to be his mistress, wrote a mild letter of reproof to Charles, advising him to be very wary in the concealment of his visits to her, upon account of his profession, which gallantry was so incompatible with: and to this letter, Charles Dormer, not enduring a suspicion to rest upon his wife's purity, replied, by a full confession of what he had done, and implored his father's forgiveness for his clandestine marriage.

" But great and terrible was the wrath of Lord Ixworth, who could so leniently treat a supposed much greater transgression in his son; now he pronounced his most direful malediction upon his head; announced the total loss of his favour to all who should aid or countenance this degenerate branch of their lofty tree; from whom he instantly withdrew all support, and bestowed on others the church preferment he had intended for him; and, ere this hapless year expired, poor Clara, from a dan-

gerous illness caught after her accouchement, was totally deprived of her vocal excellence; and thus was that resource for subsistence wrested from them.

"And now the violence of vindictive resentment in every branch of his family, tearing, by misrepresentation of the connexion he had formed, every link of friendship, or pity, from the wretched Charles, only by the efforts of his pen, and Clara's now few remaining pupils in singing, could they make out a mere subsistence for themselves, and rapidly accumulating family, until a rheumatic fever overpowered poor Charles at a time of Clara's confinement, when both their exertions for daily bread being suspended, debt and ruin came rapidly upon them; and when both sufficiently recovered, to recommence their strenuous efforts to sustain four helpless children, and pay their creditors, not all their determined labours in the cause of honesty could avail; and Mr. Dormer was arrested by his butcher for twelve pounds, and torn from his wife and infants to a prison.

"Then, and not until then, the unfor-

tunate Charles addressed his heart-riving supplications to his inexorable parents, his brothers, his sisters, his every relative, to aid, even by subscription, for his liberation; that once more he might assist his hapless, but inestimable Clara, in the maintenance of his then starving, helpless innocents: but each application met an ungracious negative, or the contempt of total silence; when at length, in despair, as a last resource, Mrs. Dormer parted with the last of her wardrobe that could bring her aid, and on the roof of a night coach she reached Hastings; from whence, without tasting food, since she had no means to pay for it, she walked to Marino, intending to make her petition in person to her once kind guardian: but that design Lady Marian effectually prevented; for she received her unfortunate sister-in-law, whom she overwhelmed with the most bitter revilings, for proving the source of her brother's ruin; then turned her from the house, without even the sustenance a cup of cold water could afford her; so apprehensive was her guilt of Bouverie's finding her there, and discovering the sums

obtained from him, for this brother's use, had been appropriated to other purposes."

A few unfeeling lines, addressed to her brother, to forbid, in positive terms, any application to the general; and which, in her hurry to get rid of this most unwelcome suppliant, she had not sealed, Clara had it in her power to show to Mrs. Bouverie, in attestation of the truth of her assertions.

Our heroine's was a heart not likely to hear such a tale as this unmoved; she gave —and with all the conciliating kindness that bestows without a wound to pride— five guineas to Mrs. Dormer, to defray the expenses of her journey back to London; gave her also a letter to Lord De Moreland's banker in town, (on whom she had unlimited credit, as his lordship's almoner,) requesting him to liberate Mr. Dormer, and to contribute to his comforts by a supply of fifty pounds.

Adelaide's reason for not doing all this from her own purse, was through apprehension, inspired by her conversation with Montagu upon pecuniary arrangements,

that it would not soon be in his power conveniently to yield her any supply.

Our benevolent heroine made the unfortunate Mrs. Dormer go to bed, to obtain some rest ere dinner; which meal this almost joy and gratitude phrensied young woman took with Adelaide; who, as this anxious wife was all impatience to make her husband a participator in her joy and gratitude, sent her, immediately after tea, in the carriage, accompanied by Obearn, and attended by Dennis, to the Swan at Hastings, to sleep that night; and to set off from thence on the morrow, in the day coach, to London; the thoughtful benevolence of Adelaide supplying her with a bountiful addition to her scanty wardrobe —a temptingly furnished basket of sandwiches for her own journey; and a hamper of viands, to make a feast with her husband and children upon their meeting.

Adelaide, whose humanity had urged Mrs. Dormer to remain another day, to rest; yet felt relieved when she had departed, as she would not for worlds have invidiously placed her own conduct before *Bouverie*, in contrast with Lady Marian's.

"Ah! no," she mentally sighed; "let him discover her faults himself; by me he shall never be led to the detection of one of them:" and lest he should those she developed that day, she carefully concealed from her beloved Obearn, and all her household, the affinity of the distressed stranger to her ladyship.

As Lee had been invited by Fitzpatrick to attend the excursion of the day to Old Roar, and Dennis being gone to Hastings, no lights were brought to Adelaide after the close of evening; and as the pale sober light of the moon assimulated with the melancholy tone of her thoughts, she forbore to call for any; and in her little portico she sat, pensively meditating upon her chances of restored happiness, until roused from her reverie by the sound of approaching footsteps; and in a moment after her husband stood before her.

"Oh, Montagu!" she exclaimed, in tremulous joy, "how your sudden appearance has startled and surprised me!"

"It would not have surprised you," he replied, taking a seat beside her, "had you known how miserable I have been, through

this whole day, in absence from you. I have thought of nothing but you, in the midst of hilarity; of the direful danger that nearly deprived me of you; of your sweet address to me upon the subject of the Duke of St. Kilda; of the anecdote I heard of your benevolence from two urchins this morning. In short, Adelaide, I have had no peace, no comfort, through the day; and I stole away from Marino the moment I could escape unobserved to my solitary treasure, to whom I have lately made a most negligent husband."

"Circumstances have been unkind, in taking you often from me," she mildly replied, while her heart bounded with renovated hope. "The future, I trust, will prove more indulgent to me, and spare me such pain."

Ere Adelaide terminated her last sentence, Montagu's arm encircled her waist, and drawing her cheek to his, she quickly felt a tear from his, bedewing hers;—her fluttering heart seemed now on her lips; and worlds she would have given to speak something in the consolation of sweet

kindness to him; but she knew not how, without betraying she was too deeply versed in the secret of his misery.

At this moment Dennis appeared with lights in the drawing-room; and Obearn entering the portico to seek her child, terminated a scene, in which the softening feelings of Montagu towards his wife seemed hastening to betray all secrets to her.

Bouverie had ordered his groom to have his horses in readiness to take him to breakfast at Marino on the morrow; but, when the morrow came, the influence of Adelaide still prevailed, and he took that repast with her; and found such witchery in her every look and accent this morning, that with extreme reluctance he quitted her; and that not until, by a gallop's speed, he could reach his regiment in time to march with it into the field, where the spells of Lady Marian could not operate; for commanding his corps through a long series of manœuvring, from hill to dale, in sham skirmishes, he had neither time nor opportunity for more than a smile, or ogle, *en passant*.

Adelaide, secure of the Duke of St. Kilda being engaged at the review, ventured to Hastings, to make some purchases; and on her return home, perceiving the footpath the Harpers told her went undeviatingly from the gate to the seashore, she sent the carriage home; and with Obearn and Dennis descended to the beach, where the sea rolled its welcome at her feet, and where she felt so renovated by its salutary breezes, that she found no inclination to return to her cottage until near six o'clock; for in every scene she could now discover charms, for hope was again an inmate of her bosom.

Adelaide had scarcely entered her dressing-room, when she heard Bouverie's rapid step, and jingling of his accoutrements, advancing up the stairs; and although his speed indicated nothing like it, she felt alarm of accident; and instantly opening her door, anxiously inquired, had any thing happened?

"Not an accident through the day," he said.

"Then you are come home, Montagu, to dress for dinner at the general's?"

"I am come home to dress for dinner at Mrs. Bouverie's."

Adelaide's ineffably sweet and animated smile proclaimed the rapture of her heart; and promptly turning to Obearn, demanded, in a tone of anxiety and alarm, "If any thing had been sent to Marino that morning?"

Obearn could not tell; when Adelaide, playfully twirling Montagu out of her way in the narrow passage, and gracefully kissing her hand to him in adieu, flew down the stairs to go and arrange for his mess, whilst he stood gazing after her as long as he could see her; and then turned into his dressing-room, wondering "what his gracefully agile wife could mean by her question to Obearn."

Lord De Moreland's cook borrowed by Adelaide, although a woman, was a first rate one; therefore the small dinner now judiciously ordered by our heroine was dressed inimitably and expeditiously; and was served up with all the alluring comfort that reflects credit on the mistress of a table.

Bouverie, enchanted with the charms of

his little home, and with a sensation of more internal happiness than he had for some weeks experienced, at finding himself at his own table, with Adelaide presiding at it unveiled, made the best dinner he had ever eaten in Sussex: yet, elegant as this repast of our young caterer's proved, it yielded the palm to her dessert; and Bouverie was so surprised at her power of procuring such fruits, that she, in her turn surprised, exclaimed—

"Surely, Montagu, you have had finer lately at General Harley's?"

"Never any thing like it," replied Bouverie, in augmenting astonishment—"but allow me to request an explanation of your meaning."

"Then you have not been thanked for all the luxurious delicacies which came from Roscoville last week; and which I sent immediately, with your compliments, to the general and Lady Marian; that—that," she added, blushing, "you might partake of them, Montagu.—Again to-day the caravan arrived; which, according to our dear uncle's orders, is to travel after us *twice* a week with provisions, as long as

the distance we may be at renders it practicable; and I ordered the cook to send a new supply to-day, since for the party to-morrow they might be useful to Lady Marian."

"My Adelaide!" said Bouverie, penetrated to the soul by her kind attentions to him, and stabbed to it by remorse, to think how in unconsciousness she had sent presents to a potent rival; "my Adelaide, allow me to request nothing further may go to Marino; not yet, at least: but the next choice provisions you have to spare, send them to our regimental mess."

Bouverie felt himself completely in the fair road to become Benedict the happy, as long as his own exertions, and the enchantments of his fascinating wife, banished from his pained remembrance the anguish the most alluring of Cupid's enthusiasts would be agonized by, through his inconstancy. While this Lethean sip was operating, he walked, the happiest of the happy, round her fairy land with Adelaide; and in misery while its influence was suspended. In this fluctuation of bliss and wretchedness, he attended our heroine to

the beach; but when she returned with him into the house, and sounded her harp for the first time in his hearing, even the anguish which Lady Marian might endure ceased to be remembered.

At length Adelaide rang for lights; and one of the housemaids appeared, pale and trembling, to announce, "Mr. Lee was gone to Bexhill."

"But where is Dennis?"

"Lauk, ma'am! Mr. Dennis!—but do not be alarmed, pray ma'am; for he has come to:—but he has been *fitting*, ma'am, down in the village."

"In fits!" exclaimed the terrorized Adelaide: "Oh! my poor Dennis!"

"No, *fitting* with five men, ma'am. Some of Mr. Harper's people brought him home for dead; but now he has revived, I am *afeard* of my life neither Mrs. Obearn or cook will have power to keep him from going out to fit again."

At this intelligence Montagu and Adelaide flew to the kitchen, where they understood this valued servant was; and where, when they entered, they beheld him, with the voice and gestures of a

maniac, his face disfigured with gore, struggling with the weeping Obearn, as he exclaimed—

"Norah! though 'tis to distraction I love you, I cannot be minding you now; for, by the blessing of Heaven, I will commit murder ere I sleep!"

"Dennis! what do I hear?" cried Adelaide, in the sharp piercing tones of horror.

Dennis turned round at her voice, and burst into tears.

"My poor fellow! what has happened thus to agitate you?" said Bouverie, kindly approaching him.

"May be not much to surprise your honour," he replied, in a tone of bitter agony; "but I have lived to have my heart broken, my ears insulted, my liver scorched in my body, by hearing the villany of the wide world proclaim the only angel in it, barring, indeed, poor Norah Obearn, (who, if not at all out, is nigh kin to one)—your honour's Dolly, and not your lawful wife."

Bouverie's indignation was extreme, although far short of the phrensy of Dennis; and vain were the arguments of Adelaide to

convince them both, a report so wild, so easily refuted, could prove a matter of not the smallest consequence to her, for Montagu insisted upon knowing the calumniators; affecting, as Adelaide proceeded in her view of the report, to treat the matter even more seriously than he thought the folly of it really merited, for the purpose of pacifying Dennis; and taking the peril of summary justice out of his hands.

"Why, your honour," said Dennis, now a little humanized from his violent intention of committing murder; yet anxious to make his master as angry as himself, and with himself, for having given foundation for such a report;—"why, your honour, the calumniators of the *creattur* that has her head jammed with sense, and her heart with goodness, are the *grandees* of Melcombe Park, their *varmint* of servants, and the parson of the parish, who preached charity so plausibly to us yesterday, the *ould humbugger!* Faith, myself noticed how they all stared, and gaped, and whispered, behaving every way to the *darlingt* yesterday in the church, but the way good manners, let alone Christianity, would be

teaching them to behave to a young stranger, who had not even so much as her husband by to protect her."

"But *och! bubbaboo!* finely the butter came out of the stirabout this evening, when 'twas down to their dab of a village I went, to see if it was as much as a grain of mustard myself could be buying in it; so with that, going past a bit of an ale-house, sorrow better was it, though it had my lord's fine coat of arms stuck up to humbug travellers, there stood five of the *varmint* who were at church yesterday, the black-guards! who all began a *hullabaloo* of 'There goes demure Dolly's scrub! My sarvice to you; how does piety in pumps do?'

"With that, myself just civilly inquired their meaning? and out into a horse laugh they burst, shouting all at once, 'A Paddy! a Paddy! No wonder he has brass enough to appear so contentedly, without a blush, the *futman* of a kept miss.'

"Is it Miss Adelaide, the *darlingt* of the world, ye dare to insult?" said I.

"With that, your honour, up they set a yell of laughter, saying, 'I had made her

out even worse than they suspected her to be:'—but sure I have no call to be entertaining your honour with what such cattle kept saying, since the substance of their slander is this—

"That the jewel of precious treasures is thought to be your honour's kept madam, by the Melcombe Park people, whom they, and Parson *Humbug*, pronounced to have mighty great audacity to pollute the church by her presence.

'And signs by it, that she is no better than she should be,' "says they—the rapscallions!"—'for she dare not show her nose at the general's; and who ever saw one of the officer's lawful ladies going near her? and was she admitted at one of the late gay military parties? no; she tarried at home, chained to the kennel her miserly keeper provided for her.—Ay, persuade us if you can, Paddy Brass, that she is a grandee, and submit to such treatment; to living in pig's paradise. An earl's niece! and heiress! and not demand the respect due to her mighty likely! truly great ladies are not so tame:—nor was she even at the grand review to-day; my lady noted that;

and my lord said, "the colonel had some grace not to insult modest women by sanctioning her appearance there."

"Adelaide," said Bouverie, pale with contrition, for having, through his own conduct, awakened such a degrading idea of her immaculate innocence—"inform Dennis that it is me he ought to chastise; —me he ought to kill, for permitting the absurd apprehensions of any one to exclude you from society; since I only am to blame for these reports, by allowing foundation for them: and was not this mortifyingly for me the case, I would not allow a moment to intervene ere I called on Lord Melcombe to place your fame in its own bright purity.—Adelaide, my wife! you who look so forgivingly kind upon me, exert your influence with Dennis, no further to disturb the peace; unless, with better justice, he wreaks his vengeance upon me; and then come to me, and tell me what I can do to refute this calumny immediately."

"Nothing, Montagu, to suppress the calumny yet; only exert yourself to mitigate its effects," she replied, kindly taking

his hand: "I fear our poor Dennis, my brave, but impetuous champion, is severely hurt; despatch somebody immediately for the surgeon of your regiment, and go you instantly to bed, my good, my dear Dennis, and I promise you rich retaliation in the awkward revocation of all this calumny; since in the letter I received yesterday from Miss Delemere, is a very particular message to Lady Maria Melcombe; and I shall, in a day or two, when you are sufficiently recovered, send you with Miss Delemere's letter, and a note from me to her ladyship."

Dennis declared he was well enough to go that moment; but Adelaide commanded him to his bed; and Bouverie despatched the groom in full gallop to Bexhill, for Mr. Monro, the surgeon.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Monro arrived as soon as possibility would admit of it, and pronounced that Dennis had sustained no material injury, although he had received several blows about the head; one of which having stunned him, enabled some of farmer Harper's men to bear him home in his state of insensibility; but it required a very serious expostulation from Adelaide, and a rather potent administration of opium from the surgeon, to lull his indignation to that composure necessary to prevent fever.

Adelaide's reputation having suffered by the inexcusable neglect she had been treated with, destroyed, in the humiliating and remorse-inspiring conviction that he had caused it all, the halcyon feeling Bouverie was beginning to experience so exquisitely in his home; and now in misery, and wishing annihilation to the intervening time that kept him from Marino, to effect all the reparation in his power to his insulted wife, by making it a serious point

with Lady Marian to overcome her weak fastidious fears, and to pay all the civility that was due to his incomparable wife. In pursuit of his infatuation's belief, that his Marian's attentions to Adelaide would more effectually crush those diabolical reports than his own could do, Bouverie quitted her before breakfast the succeeding morning, and proceeded to Marino, to confide his distress relative to the false impressions conceived of his wife, to his oracle, his bosom's idol.

Lady Marian's jealous alarms were now most powerfully awakened, by the menacing circumstance of Bouverie's having quitted Marino on Sunday evening to go to his odious wife, in the very moment she was singing to charm him; by his again playing truant the following day, besides several alarming breakfasts; all combining to threaten her diabolical plot with annihilation; it was no wonder, therefore, her circumventing policy should craftily find arguments to lull the self-upbraidings of Bouverie, and yield him a new supply of patience, for the moment in which she should consider his obnoxious wife suffi-

ciently convalescent to be admitted to her society; for, besides the magical influence this siren had obtained over the mind, as well as the heart, of the infatuated Bouverie, he felt convinced himself, that when Adelaide should join their parties, his Platonic raptures must be suspended, or her suspicions be instantly awakened: and to give up the fascinating *tendresse* of Lady Marian's endearments, the spells of the enchantress would not now allow him even to think of, without the bitter anguish of despair: and the result of this earnestly sought for consultation was nothing in the form of auspiciousness to the cause of Adelaide; and they embarked on their gaily arranged water party with all the fervour of devotedness to each other, most innoxious to the future peace of the inestimable Adelaide.

Our heroine meanwhile was exerting the talent confided to her, in all the sweet exercises of Christian virtues: humanity and gratitude placed her, for more than an hour after her husband's departure, by the pillow of her attached, long faithful servant, whom Mr. Monro had ordered to be

dressed, but not to rise from off his bed for that whole day; and as she strove to lure his impetuous spirit from every future vindictive purpose, she added resistless force to her precepts, by the kindness with which she herself helped him to the nourishment which it was necessary for him to take while she remained with him.

From the chamber of Dennis, Adelaide proceeded to dispense the balm of her gentle pity and benevolence to some poor and sick cottagers in the neighbourhood; and not wishing to take from Dennis the consolation of the tender attentions of his long loved Norah, now he was reduced to this confinement through attachment to her, she sallied forth with only Hal for her companion: but from her charitable round she was at length chased home by awakening alarm; from the changed aspect of the day rapidly turning to all that could portend a coming storm;—and, ere she reached her cottage, each portent was realized, and a tempest had commenced.

The moment after she had delivered Hal to his grandmother, Adelaide, flitting like the passing breeze, glided up the tottering

staircase of the only remaining, yet nearly dilapidated tower, of the ancient castle, which once stood in a majestic mass on the site where the cottage and farm were now erected. Such an ascent was scarcely compatible with safety; but Adelaide's heart had room for no fear, save for Montagu.

From the summit of this tower she could see the tremendous deep most plainly; and she expected to discern every sail on its way to Pevensey; but she found herself mistaken: she beheld the sea raging with terrific aspect; but the density of the atmosphere precluded the extent of prospect she had hoped to view.

With the anguished tremor of increasing alarm, from the observations she had made upon the portentous elements, she descended, in agony's speed, to seek for comfort somewhere; nor once remembered the danger she was braving was equally perilous with any that could, even on the sea, at that moment assail her husband; nor did the cumbrous pieces of the mouldering ruin, her own light footsteps removed, awaken her to a sense of her temerity; but

at the bottom of this delapsed staircase farmer Harper beheld her, when his ruddy countenance grew pale at the hazard she had run, and, sickening at the thought, this honest son of humanity instantly placed the barriers on the gate, to prevent her being again led to such rashness by fears, he augured mentally, would find cause for increase ere the day closed; since he read augmenting violence in the aspect of the gathering clouds, and he knew the boatmen employed on the party the least skilful of any on that part of the coast: but these pieces of alarming information he had kindness and prudence to keep to himself; whilst he strove to pacify her alarms, and promised to go down to the beach and learn where the pleasure boats had last been seen, ere the mist excluded them from view.

Lee, whose affection for his master filled with painful alarm too, volunteered in being the companion of their amphibious landlord to the beach, while the moments of their long protracted stay were bringing fast augmenting dismay to the bosom of Adelaide, by the increasing power of the

sudden storm; and in trembling agony of alarm, in tears of anguish, she paced the lawn where she could view the swelling surges, which might, in the moment of her anxious gaze, envelop her husband, or in terrorized excursions to the kitchen of Mrs. Harper, to seek for consolation in some pantingly hoped-for portent of decreasing tempest.

But Mrs. Harper had no such comfort for her; neither had the labourers around the farm, for she visited every one of them, to persecute them with questions dictated by her anguished feelings, while from Obearn she refused to seek consolation, lest alarm should be conveyed to Dennis through her absence, and raise him from his bed, to the affection-inspired madness of seeking comfort for her: and thus deprived of the bosom of her nurse to rest her sorrow-aching head upon, to participate in her terrors, and to unite with her in prayers for Montagu's safety, anguish acquired fresh poignancy, and for the first time in her life her fortitude seemed unequal to sustain the burden of her foreboding misery.

*At length*, after an absence of full two

hours, Harper and Lee returned, to tell Adelaide all they could invent for her consolation, while they were fully acquainted with the most serious apprehensions being entertained for the safety of the boats, which had gone out some miles in a deviated course from their place of destination, to see some ships of war lying in the offing.

But Lee said "he could not rest until he ascertained whether they had reached Pevensey, as it was reported; and had therefore come home to take horse to gallop to that place."—The groom entreated to accompany him; and at full speed, hurried on by the prayers and entreaties of their mistress, they set out for Pevensey, leaving her to accumulating agonies, gathering strength with the increasing storm, which had now the horrors of tremendous thunder and lightning to augment its direful aspect.

It was about seven in the evening when the distress of poor Adelaide was wound to its climax, by observing, on her anxious rounds, a man in a state of terror-inspiring alarm rush into Harper's kitchen, and

in a moment more Harper rush out with him, and both fly towards the beach with a desperate sort of speed that made them deaf to her calls.

Poor Adelaide had no recollection in this moment of Harper's second occupation; had no suspicion apprehensions for a galley returning from a successful traffic to the French coast was actuating their fear-inspiring conduct; she thought only of what filled her own bursting heart; and, in all the distraction of anticipating desperation, she resolved, in the impetuosity of acute feeling, to know all; and instantly making a temporary property of a cloth cloak and a bonnet she saw hanging up in an out-house, she closely enveloped herself in them, not to shelter her from the beating rain, but from the recognition of any one, who might think themselves authorized to restrain her in her agonizing search for news of her husband: and thus equipped, and thus terrorized, she winged her fleet way to the beach, appalled by neither the forked lightning, the direfully rolling thunder, or the deafening din of

warring elements, only as they menaced the safety of her husband.

Alone on the strand, poor Adelaide now wandered, scarcely able to maintain her equilibrium against the overpowering wind, and the flakes of spray foaming over her from the tremendous surges; but in vain she stemmed the opposing phrensy of the raging elements, since not an individual could she see to give her information; no sail could she descry; no body buoyant on the boiling breakers, as despairing fancy taught her to expect; and further, and still further on, towards Pevensey, she wandered, regardless of all things but the fate of Montagu; until, near to Bexhill barracks, some women suddenly burst upon her from behind a rock, uttering loud lamentations for their husbands, some of the musicians who were taken on the party, and whom they believed were gone to the bottom, as the express which had been sent to Pevensey to ascertain the landing of the boats was just returned, with intelligence of their not having been heard of or seen at their place of destination.

Adelaide, from the exaggerated accounts ;iven her by these terrorized women, ›btained what she believed to be a full :onfirmation of her worst fears; when lown upon the wet sands she sunk, de- ›rived of sensation, where the tide was 'oaming impetuously in; and where the ıowling women, so absorpt in their own ıffliction, left her unnoticed, inevitably to ›erish in the rising sea, which in rapid .pproaches had once already foamed to her 'eet, and in the next ebullition of its ad- 'ancing fury must have washed over her, vhen her rescue from impending peril was ›rovidentially effected.

Neither the Duke of St. Kilda nor Mr. Monro had gone on this water party; and he latter, who had just received intelli- ;ence of the landing of the regimental ›and near Bulverhithe in perfect safety, vas hastening after the wailing wives to ;ive them comfort, when the Duke of ;t. Kilda impetuously darted by him, and vith that celerity which only could avail, natched up a female from the strand, just re the inevitable billows were rushing on to *weep her into* the vast unfathomable deep.

Monro, although believing this rescued being to be the faithful tender wife of some poor fisherman, who had wandered there in the hoped-for return of her husband, and, overpowered by affection's terrors, had fainted; or, more direful yet, had been struck by the lightning's fatal electric stroke, whom his grace's humanity had led him to place on a pile of rocks, hastily followed to render any necessary assistance, if assistance could avail; when throwing aside the disguising bonnet and cloak, he discovered beneath them a faithful tender wife indeed;—the lovely Adelaide Bouverie.

The situation in which our heroine was found, told at once the tale of unalienable affection, which with the arm of despair plunged at once the poisoned dagger of disappointed hope, of fondly cherished expectation, to the bosom of the enamoured duke; and, in the direful conviction that he could never win a heart so firmly attached to an inconstant husband, his senses, which preceding anxiety had almost phrensied, were all receding at the blow, when an invocation to his firmness, from

his alarmed companion, couched in the stimulus, that, "If deprived of his aid, he must fail in the restoration of Mrs. Bouverie," roused his grace's retiring faculties, and gifted him with power and energy at once to be of all the use Monro required.

In cavities of the rock on which Adelaide now rested, were reservoirs of water, which Monro used for her recovery with such efficacy, that soon she unclosed her beautiful eyes, and, in the yet but imperfect reanimation of her faculties, beheld the uniform of his grace; when conceiving the trembling agitated being so tenderly employed for her recovery, to be her husband, she uttered a thrilling shriek of joy, as she flung herself upon the bosom of the duke, scarcely effecting the audible articulation of—

"Oh! Montagu, you are then spared to me!"

But ere the voice of the now almost subdued peer undeceived her, in addressing some incoherent words of hope's consolations to her, she had discovered her mistake; when, recoilingly withdrawing from

his support, she wildly turned to Monro, looked piteously up in his face with an expression of unutterable woe, and again became insensible.

To preserve his firmness from subjugation, was now almost more than the heart-rived duke could accomplish. Adelaide had thrown herself upon his bosom from an impulse of the most melting tenderness, and Adelaide had recoiled from his contact with shuddering impetuosity; and both actions had awakened emotions overwhelming to his faculties: and nothing but the terrors he suffered for her could have remanded his fortitude to its station, and chained him by her side to aid in her reanimation.

But the resuscitation of Adelaide was not so easily effected as her first restoration had been; and ere any symptom had evinced itself of it, Obearn, like a distracted being broke loose from confinement, stood beside her.

Obearn, roused by the horrors of the tremendous storm from her station of nurse to Dennis, to go and comfort her child, whose alarms for Bouverie's safety,

she doubted not, must now amount to agony, soon discovered her absence; and learning from little Hal—who now adoring Adelaide, had watched her through all her terror-inspired wanderings, where his own fears permitted him to observe her—"that she had taken Nanny Crittenden's hat and cloak from the out-house, and ran towards the beach like mad." She now, in direful alarm for the safety of her darling, hastened to the kitchen, to send some one to supply her place in Dennis's room, and to procure a companion to accompany her in pursuit of her idolized nursling; but fear of the lightning operating on all, she sallied forth alone.

"Oh! Monro," exclaimed the heart-rived duke, the moment he beheld the distress of Obearn, "you see how every one adores her."

"I do see it; and it will be well if I do not feel it too," returned Monro: "but, to prove our attachment to her, we must take her hence to shelter from the rain; for she is cold as the inanimation she now resembles.—The barrack sergeant's is the *most approximate* place, is near my room

too, for procuring restoratives from; there is always a good fire there, and Mrs. Welles will render us every assistance."

Obearn now threw the cloth cloak over her adored child; and the duke, snatching up the lovely inanimate form of her he idolized, swiftly bore her to the barrack sergeant's; and Mr. Monro promptly obtaining specifics from his medicine chest, Adelaide's reanimation was at length effected; when, as the carnation hue of life was beginning to retint her beautiful aspect, her eyes unclosing beheld her weeping nurse, she threw herself upon her bosom; and in the most thrilling tones of plaintive anguish, implored her to tell her all the fatal truth.

At this moment, with all his national impetuosity, Fitzpatrick rushed into the room, to summon Mr. Monro to prescribe for several ladies at Marino, who had been on the water party, and just returned, were overpowered by the sickness and terror they had endured.

Fitzpatrick had got so far in his message to Mr. Monro, when Adelaide, with a wild eagerness that told at once the sickening

joy of hope, the agony of contrasting fears, demanded—

"Was Colonel Bouverie in safety?"

"Colonel Bouverie's safety was never in danger, madam," Fitzpatrick replied, gazing in amaze upon her.

A cry of unequivocal joy, bursting spontaneously from the heart of Adelaide, broke on the sympathizing ears of all present, as her prompt impulse of gratitude to Heaven would have sunk her to her knees, when shame, at the terrestrial witnesses she had been about to utter a thanksgiving before, sent her blushing face to seek concealment on the bosom of Obearn, while her heart breathed its fervent acknowledgment in silence to the throne of mercy, for the preservation of her husband.

"How came it that Colonel Bouverie's safety was never in danger?" asked Mrs. Welles.

"Because my lady became alarmed at the first black cloud, and chose to come on shore; when the colonel, Mrs. Gayville, and Captain Warren, accompanied her; and since two o'clock he has been safely at *Marino.*"

The duke and Monro cast a look replete with significant meaning at each other. Adelaide, the electrified Adelaide, looked too; but it was up to Heaven, to supplicate its mercy to spare her senses, under intelligence which struck at once to her heart in horrid conviction, that now no hope remained for her; since now, in the fascinations of Lady Marian, Montagu had learned to forget his humanity:—from two o'clock, not one interval from magic's infatuation arose to remind him of the sufferings the raging tempest was, without a doubt, agonizing his wife with for his safety.

The anguish of her heart was visible on the surface; it tinted her beautiful face with grief's palest hue, her lip quivered, and for a moment the distraction of despair was visible on her brow: but scarcely was it legible there, until it changed to the meek aspect of resignation, so affecting to those who, deeply interested for her feelings, studied the expressive index to them, that in alarm of discovering their sympathy to her, the duke and Obearn turned, in emotion almost beyond conceal-

ment, their faces, marked with tender pity, from her view.

But this kind endeavour at concealment did not escape the observation of the heart-rived Adelaide; who, terrorized lest she had betrayed to any mortal being her husband made her wretched, now, with the spontaneous zeal of affection, eager to save Montagu from censure of her awakening, with an effort of invincible fortitude remanded tranquillity to her aspect; yet from which she could not banish those tell-tale touches that revealed the sublime source of principle from which she acted; and, with a placid smile, she calmly addressed Mr. Monro, with an entreaty to delay not, upon her account, his attendance at Marino, as she now was fully equal to the power of walking home.

"I have taken the liberty of ordering a carriage for your conveyance home, Mrs. Bouverie, and it will soon be ready," said the agitated duke, in a tone of tremulous emotion betraying the interest of his very soul for her.

"I am *sorry*, Mr. Fitzpatrick, I cannot *attend your* summons to Marino at pre-

sent," said Monro: "present my respects to the general and Lady Marian, and inform them, the dreadful alarm, and consequent severe illness, of Mrs. Bouverie, precludes the possibility of my leaving her until I have seen her safely to her home."

"Pray, I entreat you, Mr. Monro," said Adelaide, "send not such a message to Marino—since, as I am now quite well, it would only distress Colonel Bouverie unnecessarily; and I should again request you to give up your kind care of me, and hasten to Marino, only that—that—"

Adelaide here suddenly ceased, and deeply blushed; she could not add, "that I am unwilling to be left solely to the care of the duke;" and Monro, seeming at once to comprehend the cause of her embarrassment, kindly extricated her from it by saying—

"Only that you know every entreaty upon that subject must be ineffectual; since it is my duty to see that no ill effect of your terror is likely to occur after you reach home."

Fitzpatrick now departed, and shortly after a carriage of the duke's drove up to

the door; when Adelaide, having recompensed Mrs. Welles for the trouble she had occasioned her, entered the carriage with Obearn, and Mr. Monro took his station on the box; and, although his grace's heart was with the lovely traveller, through delicacy to her he forbore to take his seat by his friend, which his warring wishes prompted him to do.

Adelaide, who had feared, before so many observers at sergeant Welles', to ask any questions relative to how she had fallen to the care of the Duke of St. Kilda and Mr. Monro, lest she should hear of the duke's having borne any principal part in her rescue from a situation, her memory of where she had swooned convinced her was a perilous one, learned every particular soon after her arrival at her cottage.

Monro, who was the Duke of St. Kilda's particular friend, his counsellor, his confident of his fondly cherished hopes of Adelaide's yet being his, took an early opportunity to inform her, with all the glow of colouring likely to make effect by contrast, yet craftily veiled from alarming her exquisite delicacy, in being too glar-

ingly tinted—"That his grace, when he perceived the storm had arisen to a height to awaken serious alarm in the friends of those individuals who were exposed to its fury, had promptly thought of her; and had, after despatching couriers along the coast in quest of intelligence, and offered additional rewards to induce the embarkation of the life-boats, he had proceeded to Castle Cottage to inquire for her, and give her the consolation of knowing the coast was thronged with boats, ready to put to sea on any signal of distress, and where he learned her disguise and flight to the beach, when his grace, providentially winged with terror for the distress she might endure in so horrorizing a scene, had pursued her with rapid speed; when, guided by her small footsteps on the sands, he had taken the right course, and only just arrived in time to snatch her from impending destruction."

## CHAPTER XIV.

At length, after prescribing every thing proper for our heroine and Dennis, Monro departed; when, shortly after, Adelaide feeling faint, from having had no kind of nourishment since her breakfast, requested some tea; when her fondly attached, commiserating nurse flew to procure it for her; when left alone to the indulgence of her feelings, she sunk back in her chair, the wan semblance of despair; for now even hope itself was lost; and her anguished heart, in bitterness of agony, deplored that the Duke of St. Kilda had not left her to find her lost peace in heaven.

The howling wind had abated considerably in its violence; but, during its raging fury, the door to the portico had necessarily been bolted, so that a rapid knock for admission, after an unsuccessful effort at entrance, called the despair-fixed eyes of Adelaide to look towards the door; when beholding the candidate for admittance was

her husband, she flew to let him in; when almost frantickly Bouverie clasped her in his arms, while she in thrilling joy exclaimed :—

" Montagu, you are safe! and you are come to me!" and, subdued by emotion, she sunk on his bosom with every faculty almost suspended.

By the artful arrangement of Lady Marian's pretended fears, Bouverie had been exposed to the pernicious influence of her infatuating blandishments for several hours: during which, the intoxication of this baleful passion excluded every remembrance of all other beings but the siren who inthralled him.

But as the dispersed party, who had been compelled by the angry elements to land on different parts of the coast, when and where they could, began in different detachments to arrive; and that Bouverie, released from the monopolizing spells of the insidious Marian, learned how tremendously the storm had raged, and what direful apprehensions had been awakened for the menaced safety of those who were braving the terrific billows, his thoughts,

in sudden panic, reverted to his poor neglected Adelaide, who possessed no means of knowing the dangers which he for hours had braved, were not those of raging seas and winds; and that possibly she had been suffering terrors for his safety:—for his! even ingrate as he was!—and in a state of wavering indecision, of whether he should obey the impulse that was leading him to his wife, or that which was urging his stay with Marian, he wandered through the halls and passages like a troubled spirit; where he at length heard Fitzpatrick call to an Abigail, who was flying with restoratives to some fainting ladies:

"Acquaint my lady the surgeon of the ——— foot is arrived, as Mr. Monro was engaged in attendance upon Mrs. Bouverie, who is dangerously ill, in consequence of her alarm for the safety of the colonel."

The indecision of Bouverie was now no more; for, with an excruciating pang of anguish, inexplicable in the feelings of the devoted captive of Lady Marian, he heard Fitzpatrick's intelligence; and, without one thought of fortifying his head against the rain, he rushed forward, on the wings of

terror, to his home; nay almost breathing wishes that Lady Marian had been safe in India, ere her spells had thus caused him to endanger the life of Adelaide; a view of whose despair, as he beheld her through the glass door, plunged new daggers to his writhing heart; and whose subjugation of faculty was almost more than his anguished senses could endure; and in this moment of agonized dismay, Obearn with the tea equipage entered.

The threatened suspension of our heroine's faculties was now beginning to subside; and anxious to remove alarm for her from the bosom of those she loved, she softly articulated, that she was better, indeed quite well; when the trembling Montagu clasped her with such apparent affection to his breast, that, overpowered by emotion so changed from her recent feelings, she burst into tears, and wept through joy and gratitude; until, as she clung to her now most tender supporter, she discovered his clothes were drenched with rain; when, in agony of new alarm for him, she entreated *him* to make not a moment's delay in changing them.

To pacify her, Bouverie arose, to retire; when, upon inquiring for Lee, he learned where he was gone in anxious search of information relative to him; and he blushed with shame and contrition at his own reprehensible omission, in having suffered his own family to endure such distress for him, while he was basking in those smiles that had subdued all recollection of his duty: but Adelaide's slumbering powers now once more awakened to a glow, even menacing to the sorceress Marian, he rapidly despatched this toilet of precaution, and returned to his lovely wife: whom now as he beheld, in tender sweetness, without one reproaching frown upon her brow, or murmur from her lips, for all he made her suffer, receiving him as a treasure spared to her from a probable destruction, he questioned whether one moment of that day had proved such sweet, such precious solace to his heart, as those now endeared by Adelaide's enchantments.

Learning from Obearn, that, absorpt by anxiety for him, her darling nursling had tasted no food since breakfast, Bouverie hurried her to take some tea; and coaxed

her to partake of this light beverage with such tenderness of solicitude, that the full heart of Adelaide, unused to such excess of happiness, almost destroyed the faculty of complying.

But, ere Bouverie had finished this employment of grateful tenderness and anxious contrition, Lee, drenched to the skin, and trembling with passion, burst into the room.

" Sir," he exclaimed, " I congratulate you upon your safety ; and my dear young lady, who ventured her life up the old tower to watch the sea, in anxiety for you, I doubly congratulate, that you are restored to her.—I have been, sir, attended by all the agony of distress an old attached servant could be afflicted with for the safety of a beloved master, on the speed of a gallop too great for my years, as far as Pevensy, making my horrorized inquiries every where for you.—My eyes have been nearly put out by the lightning. I am drenched to the skin by the rain, and narrowly escaped breaking my neck by a *fall* I got from my terrified horse; but the *thing* which has hurt me most keenly,

was finding, when on my return I called at Marino with my queries, that you had been in perfect safety there all day, without so much as thinking you had even a poor old servant at home, whose heart was bursting at the idea of your danger."

Had any other cause in existence led Bouverie to err, had any other cause led him thus to disregard the feelings of others, in the prompt contrition of an ingenuous, benevolent heart, he would have owned, have deplored his fault, and have sued even from his servant for forgiveness: but here, illicit love was the disgraceful cause; and that could not be avowed in extenuation for having led him, for the first time in his life, to become insensible to the feelings of others: and in this degrading mortification to his pride of rectitude, he could find no excuse, to shield him from the direful apprehension of being despised by Adelaide; to whom was thus unceremoniously revealed, that although he was in safety, he had cruelly omitted to apprise her of it; and now his self-love, writhing in its wounded consequence, im-

pressed a stranger, as an auxiliary; and was lighting up anger, as a delusive defender; when the affectionate Adelaide, reading and pitying the humiliating conflict in her husband's mind, commenced his advocate at once with Lee; and then with winning kindness recommended him to the care of Obearn; who, just instructed by Mr. Monro, knew the proper treatment of those who had, like him, run so great a hazard of cold.

Lee's anger had changed to tears; and now, unable to speak, he quitted the room, subdued by Adelaide; and so was Bouverie; for her gentle sweetness, in extenuating his fault, which to her had been so heinous, lured his thought from anger against his petulant servant into admiration at her goodness, teeming with further menace to the power of Lady Marian.

When Lee departed with Obearn, Bouverie pressed Adelaide to his bosom, in agitated gratitude for her kindness; and then inquired "What old tower she had ventured to ascend?"

"Wherever I ventured, Montagu," she

replied, "you see I escaped unhurt; therefore I beseech you let us not revert to scenes of terror."

"Nay, Adelaide; but I must inquire what occasioned Monro's being summoned to you?"

"As I am now quite well, what need of inquiry, to make pain for yourself, dear Montagu, through my coward weakness?" responded Adelaide, blushing in consciousness of how much Bouverie would feel his omission, did he know all she suffered by it.

In an impulse of gratitude for evident forbearance, Bouverie kissed her hand; and then began to pace the room, in meditation upon the possibility of breaking from the spells of Lady Marian: but at length the entrance of Obearn broke this chain of musing, so auspicious to her nursling; and introduced into his mind sensations of painful contrition, mingled with the baneful pang of jealous fears.

"I hope, my dear young lady," said this fondly attached attendant, "you will not delay much longer following the prescriptions of Mr. Monro. I am sure you

have not told my master all, or I should have had no occasion to put in my word."

Bouverie, now in alarm, desired to know all; which Obearn, without any of Adelaide's merciful forbearance, related most fully; when her painfully agitated auditor, without a comment, snatched his wife into his arms, and flew with her to her dressing-room; and, when arrived there, in a faltering tone he desired Obearn to make all possible expedition in obeying the commands of Mr. Monro.

Bouverie now descended to the drawing-room, which he paced with hurried footsteps, in all the mental inquietude of a man dissatisfied with his own actions; miserable from the conflict of a chaste and an illicit passion; agonized at sufferings his own omission had given birth to; shocked at inhumanity, which he dare offer no plea in vindication of, nor implore pardon for; melted by affection so unequivocally evinced; while, in the paradoxical flights of human nature, even in the moment of conviction of his wife's tender attachment, *he* writhed in jealous agony:—the apparently devoted lover of Lady Marian Har-

ley trembled at the influence the ever ready flattering assiduities of the Duke of St. Kilda might have upon the heart of Adelaide, did Adelaide continue to be neglected: and that she would never again be so, an obtruding impulse in favour of the siren Marian, made him hesitate in pronouncing certain.

At length, according to his orders, Obearn informed him her child was in bed; when Bouverie, with the unsteady pace of agitation, proceeded to his wife's apartment; where, seating himself by her pillow, he first tenderly expressed his gratitude to Heaven, for her two escapes from impending destruction that day; then hesitatingly uttered his contrition at all his reprehensible omission had caused her to endure; and then in a tone thrilling dismay to the bosom of Adelaide, he proceeded by many formal apologies, if he was inflicting pain by his questions, "To beg to know her motives for evading his inquiries of what had occasioned Mr. Monro to be summoned to her?—Or had he guessed them, when he ascribed them to a wish *of concealing* from him the kind, the

tender, the ready assiduities of the fascinating Duke of St. Kilda?"

Adelaide, overpowered by painful amazement, could not reply.

"You will not condescend, then, to answer me, Mrs. Bouverie; and I must suppose my own conclusions are not erroneous."

"Oh! Montagu," she said, with touching emotion, "my silence now was occasioned by the torturing pang of unjust, as unexpected suspicion:—my silence in the drawing-room had nothing in it, believe me, to merit such an inference. From my early knowledge of the benevolence of your nature, I was convinced it would afflict you to learn you had, by an omission, occasioned suffering to any one.—I thought—I feared it might wound your feeling heart, to think, that while you forgot I might be agitated by alarms for you, another remembered how your wife might be affected; and by that humane remembrance was led to preserve my existence."

"The contrast was striking, certainly, madam; and I see—I—I fully perceive

you felt it forcibly," said Bouverie, shaking with agitation.

"The force of that contrast which I felt between you and the Duke of St. Kilda, I think was plainly evinced by my reception of your respective suits, Montagu," said Adelaide mildly.—"At the same period you both addressed me; and why, if my preference was not decided, unalienable, did I accept you, and reject him, who was even then adorned with his ducal coronet, so attractive in the eyes of female vanity?"

"Adelaide! Adelaide! *you* rejected him not. It was to Lord De Moreland he made his offer for you; and, without even mentioning it to you, your uncle said your negative," exclaimed Bouverie, now writhing in this remembrance, which had been fixed upon his mind by the impressively artful remark of Lady Marian; who, in the wiliness of her manœuvres, had drawn from him the whole particulars of the duke's addresses to Adelaide.

"Oh! Montagu," said our agitated heroine, almost subdued to tears; "why will *your memory* thus play truant in unkind-

ness to me?—You cannot forget—surely you cannot, my husband, that after assured by my uncle, by your brother, and even by yourself, that the Duke of St. Kilda was seriously attached to me, I unhesitatingly accepted you? Lord De Moreland assuredly conveyed my negative without consulting me, because I was then engaged to you; and if I had not, I could not have united myself to the duke."

"May I ask why, Adelaide?" said Bouverie, in a softened voice.

"Because, from my earliest days, my affection clung to you.—Unconsciously I loved you; and when you returned from Malta, my heart discovered its own secret; and that, devoted to you, I would never have given my hand to another."

From the inthralment of Bouverie's struggling heart to Lady Marian, he had never wooed Adelaide to any tender avowal of her affection, or ever to betray any spontaneous effusions of it; and, unlured to it by him, she was too sensitive in delicacy to evince her feelings without some powerful cause: so decided a declaration of them he had never heard before; and

the tone in which she uttered this avowal was so resistless in proof of tenderness, that the influence of jealousy vanished at the sound; and now, imploring her to forgive the insult of those unkind suspicions he had dared to breathe, he soon, by the tenderness of his accents, and the affection of his language, relit the bright lamp of hope in the breast of Adelaide—"that, however lured to transient inconstancy, the heart of her husband was not irrevocably estranged from her."

At length the family had all retired to their chambers, and Bouverie was in his dressing-room preparing for his night's repose, when a courier from Marino arrived, to inquire "If Colonel Bouverie was safe at home; as, from his cap being found after his sudden disappearance, the most direful alarm for his safety had been awakened, and the most anxious search been made for the last two hours?"

Upon learning Colonel Bouverie had been at home for *these* two hours, the courier, who was Lady Marian's confidential footman, requested to see him, since *nothing less* than his ocular demonstration

of his safety could allay the alarms awakened at Marino for him.

All this being reported to Bouverie, he appeared to the importunate Mr. John, to apologize too for his hasty departure, by which he had so inadvertently caused so much trouble and anxiety to his kind friends; when John, with a doleful countenance, demanded, "Was Mr. Monro still there, as he was ordered to summon him to his poor dear lady, who, within the last two hours, had been taken with such alarming fainting fits, that Mrs. Coleman almost feared she could not live till morning."

This intelligence proved an electric shock to Bouverie almost too mighty for him to sustain; and in the first impulse of his tortured feelings, he would have flown to Marino to comfort the adoring Marian, and implore her forgiveness for having thus subdued her by her tender fears for him, had not the remembrance of what his wife had suffered through alarm, kept firm a glowing record in his heart, and forbade his quitting the house to afflict her gentle bosom with the torture of suspicion, and

to wound her unequivocal affection by an appearance of unkindness and ingratitude to her: he, therefore, only expressing a small portion of the sympathy he felt for Lady Marian, promised to be early in his inquiries for her ladyship on the morrow.

But scarcely had the footfalls of this courier's horse died on the ear of Bouverie, than his fluctuating heart was with him, and he began to consider himself a brute to Lady Marian; and the distress which Adelaide had endured, to fade into insignificance, compared to all his idolizing Marian then was suffering; and, in an anguished conflict, he was debating upon the panted-for possibility of immediately setting out for Marino, when Obearn tapped at the door, to entreat he would come to her mistress, who was in an agony of distress, believing that late messenger from the general's was an express come with a route to take him on some dangerous expedition.

Adelaide distressed, in magic influence lulled the claims of Lady Marian upon his commiserating tenderness:—he flew to his *wife, whom he* found indeed in an agony

of susceptibility's infliction; but whom he soon soothed to tranquillity, by announcing what alarm his forgotten cap had awakened.

"But," he added, "in that moment all things in the world were forgotten by me, but Adelaide ill, Adelaide in danger."

Our heroine, subdued by the joy and gratitude of her heart, burst into tears of pleased emotion; and as she sobbed on the shoulder of her sensibly affected husband, entreated him to go quite early in the morning, to apologize to General and Lady Marian Harley for having so alarmed them: and this kind consideration for the feelings of others, seemed to awaken to a brighter glow the hovering affection of her admiring husband.

In compliance with the request of Adelaide, as well as in consonance with his own wishes, Bouverie, so justly pronounced by Lord De Moreland "a man with two hearts," proceeded the following morning to breakfast at Marino, where he found Lady Marian not so ill as her courier had represented, but sufficiently so to aid in operation upon the wavering heart of Bou-

verie, for she had really suffered considerable alarm on the finding of his cap after his disappearance; but the agony which caused her sleepless night, and gave to her languishing eyes the resistless languor they wore that morning, arose from the direful pang conveyed by the intelligence, that the illness of Mrs. Bouverie had called her husband so suddenly from Marino; since his delaying not to fortify his head against the beating rain, betrayed the tale of deep anxiety, indicative of ardent tenderness; and, in all the writhing torments of awakened jealousy, she now exerted her mining arts for the total subversion of Adelaide's menacing influence; and so judiciously arranged were all her passion traps, that it was with reluctance amounting to painful, Bouverie found himself called upon by the general to accompany him to inspect some works along the coast, which would detain them from home that night; and as this annoyance was not expected by Bouverie when he left his wife, he despatched a note to her to apprise her of his absence until the morrow; and written with so much kindness of expression, that

it threw no shade over the newly budding hopes cherished in the breast of Adelaide.

Shortly after parade hour Monro arrived, and, to Adelaide's chagrin, accompanied by the Duke of St. Kilda; after whose absolute preservation of her life the preceding evening, she could not, without the most flagrant ingratitude, refuse to see: but Bouverie's unequivocal jealousy of him caused the interview to be a most painful one to her; and the consequent embarrassment which accompanied her faltering efforts at acknowledgment for the life she owed to his humanity, she felt conscious might be erroneously construed.

But although the duke read her embarrassment as flatteringly as reason would permit his hopes to portray; yet, anxious to impress upon her mind the delicacy of his attachment, he delayed not the departure of Monro one moment, whose visit was not lengthened beyond the sanction of a professional one: but, ere his grace took leave, he informed Adelaide of his having just received a note from Colonel Bouverie, to thank him for the occurrence of the preceding evening.

"Acknowledgments," continued the duke, "which, he says, he shall not be happy until he offers me in person: but no acknowledgments can be more affecting than those his pen has traced."

Worlds the blushing, nay almost weeping Adelaide, would have given, to see the expressions thus conveyed of her husband's gratitude for her preservation; but the duke, although he generously mentioned them, was yet too judicious in the manœuvres of his designs, to permit her inspecting a performance so indicative of affection for her.

Soon after the departure of this peer, Mrs. Harper entered to announce to Adelaide, "that Lord Melcombe's eldest son, Lord Woodley—lately raised, by political motives, to the dignity of a baron of the realm—had just been at the farm, to inquire particularly for her, after her terrors and indisposition the preceding day.

"Indeed," continued Mrs. Harper, "I used to hear but odd accounts of his wild pranks; but now he is a real lord, and made a parliament man without any more *fuss of elections*, as there used to be, he

is going to begin the reform in parliament as folks talk of, by becoming sedate like, and solid, as all pillars of state should be: and so he has sat an hour, at least, morning and evening with me, inquiring so humanely for Mr. Dennis, ever since his *pupil lick stick* bout, as my lord calls it; who is grown such friends with Hal as never was, *surelie;* so, ma'am, I am sure that altogether he has so good a heart, that he won't forget to reform the parliament, and bring the loaf down, and make peace; for if our trade was a little brisker with the French, I should not mind our being forced to lower the corn a bit."

Mrs. Harper's eloquence was now silenced by a summons from her husband; and shortly after the post arrived with two letters, one from Mr. Charles Dormer, so beautifully and affectingly expressive of his gratitude for all Adelaide's benevolence to his poor Clara and himself, that her susceptibility could not restrain its tears, awakened by acknowledgment so touchingly made.

The second letter was from Lord De Moreland's banker, "Informing her, he

lost not one moment in effecting the release of Mr. Dormer; of whom, from unquestionable authority, he had learned so high a character, both as a religious and a moral man, that he was determined to use his interest to obtain a lectureship for him, then vacant in the city; and at no very distant period to procure something better still for him, through the interest of a brother, the Bishop of * * *."

This morning too, every officer of Bouverie's regiment quartered at Bexhill called to make inquiries for his lovely wife, after her terrors, and consequent indisposition, of the preceding evening: but, as Adelaide made it a point never voluntarily to admit male visitors in the absence of her husband, they only, as hitherto, left their names.

## CHAPTER XV.

On the subsequent morning, shortly after breakfast, to the amazement of Adelaide, Lord and Lady Melcombe, their eldest daughter Lady Maria, and Lord Woodley, arrived to visit her.

Lady Melcombe, a most prepossessing woman, instantly apologized for not immediately paying her respects to Mrs. Bouverie upon her arrival in her neighbourhood, by frankly confessing some misrepresentations of who her fair neighbour was, had been in circulation; but from the Duke of St. Kilda having, that moment almost, removed every fallacious doubt, and explained the cause of her extraordinary seclusion from society, they had lost not one instant in coming with their excuses, and to commence so desirable an acquaintance.

"I know not what could have impelled Lady Marian Harley's ambiguous account of our fair neighbour to some guests of

ours," said Lord Melcombe, "to lead us astray, unless it was in vengeance for dropping our once great intimacy with her into the cool ceremony of mere speaking acquaintances:—but we had powerful reasons for our conduct."

Lord Woodley, an extremely handsome young man, changed colour as his father spake, and moved to the window to admire the portico.

"But I have no method to account," said Lady Maria, (a very fine and interesting young woman,) "for Amelia Delemere never writing to inform me the Adelaide Bouverie, whose eulogiums have filled volumes of letters from her pen for the last year to me, was come to be my neighbour, to give me the happiness of making a friend she taught me to envy her."

"Oh!" said Adelaide modestly, as she brightly blushed, "Amelia feared her partiality should bring her judgment to disgrace, when its test so unexpectedly drew near you: but still she thought chance, or my good destiny, would effect my introduction to you; since, in her last letter I received, is a very particular message for

Lady Maria Melcombe; which, until now, I had not the wished-for opportunity of delivering." And now Adelaide hastened to present the letter of Miss Delemere to her ladyship.

"And now, to show your goodness, in forgiving my involuntary insult of suspicion," said Lady Melcombe with conciliating kindness, "emerge from your supererogation of quarantine; and, waving the bane to social intercourse—ceremony, gratify my lord and me with the pleasure of your company at dinner this day, and accompany us to the Hastings' ball this evening, whither we are going with a large party."

"It will be inflicting poetic justice upon Lady Marian Harley, who will unquestionably be there," exclaimed Lord Woodley, smiling, "to destroy the brilliancy of her beauty for the evening, through the pale hue of terror, by bringing pounce upon her this destroying angel of contagion."

"And if you are a true woman, Mrs. Bouverie," said Lady Maria, "you will *find* so much pleasure in reprisal, you *never* can negative mamma's proposition

for your giving us the pleasure of your company at dinner, and accompanying us to the ball."

"Indeed," replied Adelaide, with a fascinating blush of timidity and smiling sweetness, "I am so very a woman, that I cannot find power to search out for even the semblance of a negative to so kind a proposition, for taking me from solitude to a most pleasing transition."

Lord Melcombe now extended their invitation to Colonel Bouverie, which Adelaide gracefully declined for him, as he was, she knew, engaged to dine at Marino; and her visitors, highly pleased with her for so promptly forgiving their insult, in their suspicion of her purity, felt no inclination to make this a short call of mere ceremony; but at length, in recollection of having guests at home, they departed, all enraptured with the fair recluse.

Adelaide, from an impulse she could not resist, had unhesitatingly accepted Lady Melcombe's invitation; through her natural wish to emerge from seclusion; not longer to fill the trump of calumny; or leave the field, uncontested, to her artful

rival: nor did she feel alarm of Bouverie's censure for having made this engagement without his concurrence; since, with pleased and glowing gratitude, she remembered the tender tones in which, the preceding morning, he regretted that Lady Longuiville was not yet arrived, for her appearing with her ladyship at the next Hastings' ball, to crush at once the report in circulation.

Shortly after the departure of her Melcombe Park visitors, a letter was delivered to Adelaide from her husband; who told her in it, "He was not long returned to Marino, where he had found poor Lady Marian in an agony of distress, from the arrival of bailiffs to arrest the general for a debt she had incurred ere she went to Malta, through humanity and tenderness to a near relative, to save him from ruin, who had failed in his solemn promise of having this debt liquidated ere her return; and now, in natural dismay at having her husband disgraced for her imprudence, and at the peril of throwing him into a fatal fit, by awakening the irrascibility of his almost phrensied violence, her ladyship had

applied to him to lend her a sum to save her from all the horrors she apprehended, by making an appeasing instalment of the debt, and to fee the terrific agents of justice for forbearance: but that, with shame, he owned to Adelaide he had not a guinea to command that moment, having a very short time since drawn all his cash from his banker's to lend to a highly estimated friend."

And now, with evident reluctance, Bouverie proceeded to "entreat Adelaide to send him all the cash she could with convenience spare, and that ere long he should be able to repay her: he then expressed his regrets, that this unpleasant business must detain him all the morning at Marino, as his dinner engagement there, and ball at Hastings, would prevent his seeing her through that day; while a supper, given by the officers of Fairlight to Lady Marian, after the ball—should Adelaide enable them to suppress the arrest, and appear at Hastings—would detain him from home to so late an hour, he thought it advisable to occupy his old quarters at Marino for that night, not to disturb her; and therefore he

must further request her to order Lee to attend at Marino with the necessaries for his toilet."

There appeared, through this whole letter, a tone of unequivocal affection to Adelaide, cooperating with the evident shame and chagrin he experienced on finding himself under the necessity of making such a request to her, that went promptly to her heart; and although assured Lady Marian was the friend for whom he had thus embarrassed himself, (since, if she contracted one great debt unknown to the general, it might be supposed she would others,) allowed no reflexions ungenial to his suit to bear effect.

Our heroine believing, that was she even to despoil herself of all the cash she had in hand, it must prove insufficient; or, at least, her generous heart prompted her to think so, when it was to answer a request of Montagu's; now wrote a few kind lines to her husband, enclosing a ten pound note for the bailiffs' fee, and a draught upon her uncle's banker, to be filled up, as necessity required it, to the extent of four hundred pounds; which sum she had deposited there,

to be in readiness to pay the new setting a particular suit of her jewels, which she knew were not yet put in hand, having received a letter from her jeweller the preceding day for new orders upon the subject; the person she had given her directions to having, through an immediately succeeding dangerous illness, lost all recollection of them.

And scarcely was Adelaide's letter to Bouverie despatched by Lee, than Mr. Monro arrived; to whom, finding it necessary to impart her engagements at Melcombe Park, for the purpose of confining Dennis to the house another day, by his absolute command, to prevent another possible pugilistic conflict, in the *hauteur* of his triumph, relative to her; and the intelligence was thus procured and secretly conveyed, by Monro, of her appearance that evening at the ball, to the Duke of St. Kilda, who had shunned every gay assemblage since his direful disappointment.

At length, Adelaide brightly blushing in juvenile timidity, attired by chaste taste and elegant simplicity, entered the

drawing-room at Melcombe Park, where she was received with politeness, accompanied by evident cordiality; and was introduced to three more of the eight lovely daughters of Lord Melcombe, his younger son Lysander; two Misses Price, lately emancipated wards of his lordship's; the Earl of Ennismore, (the accepted suitor of Lady Maria); and Sir Edward Fitzallen, a presumptive wooer of Lady Clarinda Melcombe's.

An elegant dinner, placed on hospitality's board, surrounded by cordial entertainers and cheerful guests, could not fail of passing pleasantly off; and scarcely could many individuals believe the possibility of its being time for such an interruption, when the carriages were announced to convey them to the ball.

The Bexhill garrison had arrived at the Swan before the party from Melcombe Park: and although Adelaide had not seen any officer of her husband's regiment since she became a wife, except the Duke of St. Kilda and Mr. Monro, yet she required no introduction to any of them; for they had all been presented to her when Miss Bou-

verie, at the house of Sir Charles Longuiville, in Kent; and as with them she had always been a star of powerful attraction, they felt but the more disposed to censure the slights she received from her husband, who yet had made no considerable progress in their favour; since, monopolized from the moment of his joining them by Lady Marian, and spell bound in her circle, he had little opportunity of conciliating their esteem by worth of character and charms of manners, which had rendered him so popular in the regiment he had just quitted: now all his perfections were thrown into shade by the influence of this siren.

A combination of feelings glowing in Adelaide's favour, produced for her so complete a *feu de joie* of cordial greeting on her entering the ball-room, that Lord Melcombe remarked—"They were not only Colonel Bouverie's brother officers, but, if he might judge by appearances, Mrs. Bouverie's too; since nothing could be more fraternal than their welcome of her from quarantine:" and so anxious were they all to speak to, and be spoken to,

by her, that they formed so complete a cluster round her and her party, as to exclude from her view the entrance of Lady Marian Harley, who, attended by her train, marched up to the seats at the upper end of the ball-room, which she took possession of with an air of majesty as her exclusive right.

A murmur of Lady Marian's name through the surrounding group, announced to Adelaide the presence of this siren; when her distending eyes, eager to behold this terrific being, promptly sought her out; and, for the first time, beheld the form of her who had caused her all her wedded misery: and, though prepared by expectation to behold her, yet poor Adelaide, pale, trembling with heart-bounding to sickening agony, could scarcely bear the sight of charms so dazzling, so exquisite, that her tortured senses, in anticipating anguish, pronounced her power must prove resistless.

The Duke of St. Kilda, whose attention never strayed from her he thus delusively adored, instantly beheld the altered aspect, the heart-awakened agitation, which, be-

traying its source, announced to him Adelaide had discovered, that in Lady Marian she had a formidable rival; and although upon the dominion of jealousy he promptly built an air-structure for his hopes to dwell in, he remained not one passing second inattentive to the situation of her he fondly thought would yet be his; and trembling lest her feelings should be further wounded by betraying her emotion to her triumphant rival, he eagerly exclaimed—

"Lady Melcombe, Mrs. Bouverie, why do you not secure seats? the room fills rapidly. Yonder is an unoccupied form;" and, offering his arm to Adelaide, who was linked to Lady Melcombe, hurried them on.

Adelaide took his arm, unconscious of every thing but requiring the support now offered her; and the duke led her and her companion to the vacant form, whither the rest of their party followed; and where our heroine, as before, surrounded by a martial host, began to recover from her terrible agitation, and to spread the veil of composure upon the surface of her feelings.

"Oh! Bouverie," now exclaimed Lady Marian, "I shall die of curiosity and alarm, if you do not instantly discover for me, if the creature I have just caught a glimpse of is daughter to that odious Lady Melcombe!—I have heard her fifth girl promises to be a superlative beauty; yet nothing, I must confess, could mortify me more than that capricious woman having the power to introduce, as her child, the most heavenly being that ever yet wore mortal mould!—Go! You cannot err in her I mean; the men are smothering her in their eagerness to view perfection.—But, Bouverie," she added, in a lower tone, "dare I send you to gaze at what may undo me? Oh! forget not your adoring Marian, in your admiration of this fascinating child!"

Bouverie, with a smile, flew off to obey her commands; but not until his speaking eyes assured her she had nothing to apprehend: yet how did these assurances lose their efficacy, when she beheld this object of her licentious passion suddenly start, as he was making the inquiry of his mission from Captain Clayton, and rush forward,

with extended hand, to this very being she feared should prove the child of Lady Melcombe; and who, on her part, reached out her hand in reciprocity of welcome; and who, after promptly introducing him to Lady Melcombe and many individuals of that family, he continued to converse with for so long, and with such apparent interest, that at length, unable to brook the pang of alarm and curiosity thus awakened, she despatched Captain Thornley to summon Bouverie to her.

Thornley had recognised Adelaide the moment he had obtained a glimpse of her; yet, though hearing Lady Marian's anxious wonders relative to who that fascinating creature could be, he, with his usual bantering propensity, joined in the wonders of conjecture, embodying Adelaide as every being absurd or improbable whom he could think of, until he went on his embassy, enjoying the approaching *dénouement*, yet astonished that no suspicion of the fact had entered the mind of her ladyship.

But the circumstance of Adelaide's being *with the Melcombe* family, precluded Lady

Marian's surmises glancing at the reality; since the Melcombes, she believed, supposed her hated rival to be an impure; a supposition which she had taken care, by indirect means, to strengthen, for the purpose of aiding her exclusion from society still longer; and from Bouverie she could have received no information of the interdict being removed to their acquaintance, since Adelaide's intelligence upon the subject had been conveyed in a short postscript upon the envelope of her letter; a letter which had so overpowered, so agitated him, by the affecting kindness and generosity it contained, that in the emotions of gratitude and contrition it awakened, the less important postscript was overlooked.

Bouverie thus knew not Adelaide was to be at this ball: Adelaide, whose letter had given so powerful a shock to the influence of Lady Marian, that had he not been, instantly after its receipt, assailed by all the lures of her ladyship, in her touching distress of agonizing apprehensions of this pretended pending arrest, and to all the seductive fascinations of her subsequent

melting gratitude, it stood a fair chance of being overthrown for ever: but those blandishments were too infatuating for failure; and Adelaide's power was again tottering, when he most unexpectedly beheld her in all her attractive loveliness, now flushed by agitation, and the undeviating gaze of admiration.

For a few moments the surprised feelings of Bouverie emanated in rapturous glances from his expressive eyes, at his timid, his beautiful wife, and gave the tones of tender pleasure to his accents, as he addressed her in exclamations of joy at seeing her there, and in questions of how it came to pass: but too quickly the thoughts of Lady Marian recurred; and even while Adelaide was answering his interrogations, the remembrance of all the vows and protestations, the melting endearments that had passed between him and Marian within the last few hours, darted into his remembrance; and the influence of this infatuating passion now blanched his cheeks, gave dejection to his aspect, and the sadness of despair to his eyes, as he gazed on and listened to his wife.

Thornley at length approached; and, after a profound bow to Adelaide, whom he thought the most lovely of all created beings, he informed Bouverie "Lady Marian was wild with impatience for his return with the intelligence she sent him to obtain."

Bouverie, as soon as an opportunity consistent with urbanity to Lady Melcombe and her party would permit, obeyed the summons of Lady Marian; yet with reluctance he did so; for he felt unwilling to wound the heart of his idolizing infatuator, by announcing to her this being, whom she had almost trembled at his beholding, was the very wife he had placed as an intervening barrier to their happiness.

Slowly now the heart-trembling, conscience-rived Bouverie, approached the baneful enemy of his perfect happiness; nor once raising his eyes to give and receive their accustomed impassioned glances, he stood before her dazzlingly beautiful ladyship, who instantly exclaimed—

"Well, sir! who is she? who fascinated you thus into absolute forgetfulness of the tortures of curiosity I was suffering from?

Come, say who is she, and excuse your tardiness afterwards if you can."

Why,—she is a—my adored Marian," he softly, and almost inarticulately replied—"she is my—my—she is—it is—Adelaide."

"Adelaide!" reiterated Lady Marian, in a tone of horror—"Adelaide!—Adelaide! your wife!—your—your wife! sir?"

A pause for some moments ensued; during which the agitated Bouverie sunk into his accustomed seat by the siren; who at length lowly, but impressively, articulated—

"Yes, I might have guessed who this fascinator was, without your mortifying communication, your ill-disguised triumph: the appearance of the love-lorn Duke of St. Kilda here to-night, and his impassioned glances as this *missy beauty* leaned upon his arm in tender gratitude for life preserved by him, ought to have informed me that she was the bane of my repose, the assassin of my breaking heart."

Bouverie now shook with nervous agitation; she had struck upon one of the inexplicable chords of his feelings, and made it

vibrate most unharmoniously; and as the agonizing thought of what such powerfully awakened gratitude might in possibility effect in the susceptible mind of his neglected wife, occupied his mind, his memory reverting to virtues that stood as guarantees for her firmness in the path of rectitude, filled his bosom with feelings inimical to the power of Lady Marian; who promptly perceiving, from the expression his countenance wore, that she had erred in her invidious insinuations, now eager to turn his thoughts to a strain more genial to her purpose, suddenly exclaimed, in caution's under tones—

"Oh! perfidious Bouverie! how have you vowed your heart was unalienably mine, even in the moment of your rash marriage, while the choice you made brings dire conviction to my breaking heart, your assertion was as insincere as you are!"

"Oh! Marian, most fascinating of women!" Bouverie replied, "how can the choice I have made convey this conviction to your mind?—Would it not have proved an insult to your charms, could a heart

you had permitted to adore you, allow you to believe a being less than perfect could be selected for the attempt of supplanting you?—You bade me forget you.—You—you commanded me yourself to marry, for the purpose of forgetting you."

"I did so, under the firm conviction you neither could, nor would, do either," she replied; "but as you did so to assure me of what you now vainly assert, that your heart remained still irrevocably mine, you ought to have united yourself to age and deformity, to spare my bosom the direful pang of even suspecting I could find a rival in your wife."

Bouverie now uttering some tender protestations to appease her, she became apparently composed, though in her heart envenomed maddening jealousy still rankled, urging her to determine upon every machination, whether of diabolical or otherwise, to secure her triumph over the peace of Adelaide.

## CHAPTER XVI.

At length symptoms appeared of impatience for the commencement of dancing. Lady Marian was engaged to undergo the penance, to her, of opening the ball with the ancient colonel of the Z—— militia—the regiment that was to give the supper on that night—and now, ere she began this must-do misery, she resolved not to undergo the mortification of waiting for the notice of the fastidious Lady Melcombe, but boldly go up to her at once as her equal, when she should obtain a nearer view of this alarming Adelaide.

"Bouverie," she therefore said, "conduct me to that odious Melcombe party, and introduce me to this pretty miss, your wife; since now she has been forced upon us by those meddling Melcombes in a state of apparent convalescence, my maternal fears would be ridiculed as fastidious, was I longer to draw back from her society."

Bouverie most unwillingly complied;

and, with cheeks blanched as pale as Adelaide's now were, and by feelings as painful as hers, introduced these rivals to each other.

But a very few words passed between these beautiful competitors for the heart of Bouverie, on their long protracted introduction; for Lady Marian was embarrassed; and Adelaide, from natural feeling of individual slights and serious injuries, was chillingly cold, though gracefully dignified: and her ladyship, disconcerted at a reception that told her the wife of Bouverie was not too childish to disregard her inattentions, could not recover her self-possession.

In the moment of this introduction, the conscience-rived Bouverie was necessarily a witness of it; and so much in captivating grace and elegance of deportment through it did his wife surpass her rival, that her superiority struck to his admiring conviction, and led him, by a spontaneous impulse, to take her hand and draw it through his arm with a tender pressure that reanimated the fainting heart of Adelaide at once, and gave the bright blushing rose of

hope to her cheeks, the radiance of its brilliant, though chastened gladness to her eyes; and Lady Marian, again turning to gaze upon the form she feared, started in amazement at one moment's transformation, and trembled with new alarm.

Bouverie had drawn Adelaide from her party, to express his gratitude for her kindness of that day to him, and to tell her he had not availed himself of the full extent of her generosity, having only drawn for two hundred pounds, which was a moiety of the debt, and which sufficed to assuage the violence of the angry creditor: and just as he concluded his thanks and his intelligence, he perceived the Duke of St. Kildá gazing in impassioned admiration after Adelaide, as she, unconscious of his glances, moved along; when instantly the malicious intelligence of Lady Marian darted into his memory, and with a thrill of baleful jealousy he was about to speak—

But the sound of suspicion died on his lips ere it found articulation; for he looked on her face, and that portrayed refutation to every suspicion, and assured him she had the reasons of innocence to produce

in her vindication, for having leaned on the Duke's arm; and still as he looked upon this lovely index of her innocence, recoiling more and more from the idea of inflicting pain in her gentle bosom, he changed his meditated jealous query, to the question, of whom she was to dance with?

"I am not going to dance at all, Montagu," she replied.

"Why so? Surely you must have had candidates for your hand?"

"Yes, several; but knowing you disapprove of married women dancing, I of course declined."

"I do not remember ever to have given my sentiments to you upon this subject," said Bouverie, in surprise.

"Oh! but I do, quite well.—It was at the memorable ball at Roscoville; when despised, forlorn, you were my friend, my comforter, Montagu: then, you spoke your sentiments to me of dancing married women; and although I then had no presentiment that your opinions were to become the study of my future life, the *guide of my* future actions, I treasured up

your sentiments in my faithful memory, merely because they were yours."

The tenderness of Adelaide's accents, as she spoke, affected Bouverie; they thrilled to his heart, awakening pleased emotion there; yet he blushed, in something of painful embarrassment, at the variation of his sentiments since that period, for Lady Marian was a dancing married woman; and by her witching spells she had taught him to approve of all her actions: and though he felt flattered, and pleased, at his lovely wife's remembrance of his opinion; he felt too, that although it would be awkward to acknowledge such decided sentiments had changed so diametrically, yet it would be cruelty to deprive so young a being of amusement: and, superadded, as a disengaged spectator, Adelaide might make discoveries he delusively hoped she might ever remain in ignorance of; and now, endeavouring to speak composedly, he said:

"Those were the sentiments of a very young man, my Adelaide, fastidiously founded on the improprieties he observed at Roscoville.—Since that period, I have discovered married women can dance with

perfect innocence, with perfect propriety; and as you are only a married girl, it would be peculiarly hard to exclude you from joining in an amusement in which you particularly excel: it is therefore my wish you should dance, sweet flattering treasurer of my sentiments! so tell me who was the first candidate for your hand, that I may inform him the interdict your amiable attention to your husband's wishes had raised, is happily removed."

"Lord Woodley was the first, Adelaide replied, as her bosom dilated with joy, that her husband's dependence upon her propriety of conduct induced him not to deprive her, for ever, of a very favourite amusement: "but perhaps I had better not dance to-night, since the Duke of St. Kilda asked me for the third and fourth dances; and it would be impossible to dance with others, and not with him; as —as, if you, or I, feared him, Montagu: and, considering all things, he ought not to have asked me; nor can I, in comfort, dance with him."

"It would certainly have been as well *had he not* asked you, since he has made

his attachment a matter of such publicity," replied Bouverie, charmed with her ingenuousness, and with the proposition of her delicacy; yet shrinking from the idea, with inexpressible alarm, of her being assailed, while neglected by him, by the dangerous attentions of this seductive adorer: "but, my Adelaide, gratitude forbids your rejection of his imprudent request; whilst gratitude's claim on me, for his twice preserving the life of my lovely treasure, must ever make me slow in observing any faults in him; slow in resenting any marked assiduities to you: therefore you need not fear to trust me, where he seems to trespass: and knowing your virtues, Adelaide, I cannot surely fear him."

Adelaide, pleased with his declaration relative to the duke, and flattered by his confidence in her, expressively smiled her sensibility of both; and Bouverie now perceiving his grace and Lord Woodley in conference together, hastened to inform them the interdiction to Adelaide's dancing was removed.

As Lady Marian was engaged, for the

first set, to Colonel Redoubt; Montagu, as Adelaide hoped, offered himself as a candidate for the hand of one of the Ladies Melcombe, and was accepted; and Lady Marian having succeeded in her arduous attempt of hammering into Colonel Redoubt's comprehension the figure of the dance she wished to call, who boastingly informed her, "that to obtain the honour of her hand had induced him, once more, to 'trip it on the light fantastic toe,' after nineteen years of rest," the ball commenced.

Lady Marian was a languid dancer, whose only aim was to show the beauties of her form to all possible advantage, in the studied measure of her apparently indolent movements; and Lady Maria Melcombe dancing but very indifferently, (next to whom our heroine had been placed by the courtesy of Lady Clarinda,) therefore Adelaide's super-excellence in this graceful art shone still more conspicuously, as with agile elegance, and ease, she moved on animation's light wings, like the spirit of Terpsichore, embodied in a *sylphic form.*

With sickening envy, Lady Marian beheld the admiration this terror-inspiring rival awakened; beheld with maddening jealousy, that Bouverie, too, looked on her with unequivocal rapture; and in the self-complacency of vanity's belief, of possessing power to excel all human beings in every undertaking, she determined, when it came to her turn again to dance, to throw this hated Adelaide far in shade, as a competitor: and this resolution she, in her own fancy, accomplished: but in this belief she deceived herself; the exertions were visible exertions; she possessed not the ease, the grace, the agile power, the sylph-like form, of Adelaide; she could make no movement to enchant like her; and even Bouverie turned from Lady Marian, to gaze upon the unaffected performance of his unconsciously attractive wife.

As the dancing sets were very long, Lady Maria, and Adelaide, had a good while for inaction, after they ceased to be useful to the succeeding couples, ere the second dance commenced; during which period Lords Ennismore and Woodley exerted themselves to entertain their part-

ners, by annotations upon every ludicrous figure and character in the room; and often with such force of wit and humour were these remarks uttered, that although Adelaide was amongst those beings least likely to derive pleasure from satirizing the foibles or defects of others, she was often beguiled of an involuntary smile.

During this long interval of inaction, as Adelaide's attention was thus led to others, she herself was an object of observation to Lady Marian Harley; who was, with her convenient friend, Mrs. Gayville, seated commodiously for her malicious purpose, as she waited on a seat (not deigning to be useful) for the time she was to become again the most admired performer; and who summoning Bouverie, (who was liberated from his partner, Lady Emma Melcombe, by a sudden pain in her side prohibiting her dancing more,) endeavoured to impress upon his mind, "that the illness occasioned by his wife's alarm for his safety during the storm, could not have been so great as the hyperbolical Duke of St. Kilda, with his devoted satellite, Mr. Monro, had considered it expedient to de-

scribe it; or she could never have recovered so surprisingly as to look so joyous with those grinning boobies; or be so robust, to stand like a sentinel, who dare not leave his post, for all the Goths and Vandals to prance with."

"You, Lady Marian, were alarmed to illness too, to violent, overpowering illness, by your apprehensions for my safety," said Bouverie, in a tone of quickness, less tender than usually sounded in his accents to this siren; "and yet you have recovered."

"Not recovered like your wife. Oh! no, no!—Do not my languid eyes betray that fact?" Look at them, and see if they do not."—Bouverie did look: and her glances teemed with menace to the growing influence of Adelaide.

"Ah! Bouverie," she now continued, "my dragging my feeble frame hither, my apparent animation, my agile movements in the dance, are all exertions, to give me the transport of passing my evening where the adored of my soul, I knew, was absolutely obliged to be.—But, Bouverie, do ask your reason, is it possible for this hate-

ful Adelaide to love with such tenderness as the effect of alarm portrayed for us evinced; and yet so tamely, so unmurmuringly endure such a mortifying monopoly of your time at Marino? Think you, had no personal fear influence in such a pathetic catastrophe? or are we sure she totally swooned into absolute insensibility?—or was it just a sufficient semblance of a swoon, to sanction the sighing knight of the amorous countenance catching her in his arms; and yet not deprive her of all perception of the throbbing of his heart, or the impulsive pressure of his love-palsied arms?——

"Ah! Bouverie, remember how such a scene was once enacted by us, in the dawn of your passion for me; when I, unconscious the germ of mine was sown in my heart, until that moment of half insensibility: but how, from that moment, has it grown!—how deeply taken root!—how blossomed! and now only can end with life.—Ah! my adored! believe these suggestions are not the offspring of invidiousness. I doat on you to distraction, yet *equally homage* the path of honour: then

condemn me not if I hail every probable symptom of your wife proving a strayer from that path; since by her overthrow alone my happiness can eventually be secured."

Bouverie had not been pleased with one single sentence uttered in this long address to his feelings, though delivered in tones of melting tenderness: but when she turned his retrospective memory to a swooning scene at Malta, the recollection of all that emanated from it thrilled through his heart in torturing panic of alarm; his imagination firing at once into all the mental phrensy of apprehensive jealousy, which her terrible concluding hope augmented, he took prompt advantage of the precise Colonel Redoubt summoning Lady Marian to her post as a dancer, to effect a precipitate retreat from the room; from whence he fled on to the fort, there, in solitary pedestrian musing, to ruminate upon all the evils, the wretchedness, menacing through his infatuated passion.

But, after the first tumult of dismayed feeling permitted the thoughts of this defaulter in the path of rectitude to take

any thing like a distinct train of reflexion from the general mass of misery and ruin his apprehensive senses were stunned by, the idea of Adelaide's heavenly innocence being in possibility taught to stray, seemed, above all other ills, the one most agonizing to his bursting heart; the one he seemed most adhesively to cling to; until the question obtruded of, "Why was such a horror cherished in his belief of possibilities? for, knowing the mind of Adelaide so perfectly, could he with justice even sully her purity by the daring of a supposition that she could be led astray? Oh! no, no! the very shadow of such a suspicion was profane; since she was formed from a model of every celestial virtue; and where, in what instance, had he ever witnessed those virtues to falter towards a mortal's frailty?"

And now Bouverie, in aiming to seek for even the semblance of error in his wife to build an excuse upon, for daring to shelter a horrid apprehension relative to her, retraced through every instance he could revert to, nothing but proofs that *for her innocence* he need not tremble;

for its basis was piety, the twin-born of her heart, nurtured by precepts of divine origin, and strengthened by habit: and in this retrospection, so bright, so lovely, appeared the excellence of her he had in her childhood idolized, but neglected in maturity, that the pangs inflicted by the thought of eventually destroying the peace of Lady Marian, seemed to lose their poignancy; and more than once he mentally exclaimed—

"And should the peace of Marian be indeed virtually destroyed, she must upbraid herself for it; for is she not more culpable far than I am? since she lured, nay, forced me from my connubial happiness, which was pouring fast, like precious balm, into my long wounded heart, and promising me, in sweetest visions, every bliss that mortal life could know.—She drew me from my growing paradise, my hourly expanding Elysium, to terrible transgressions against my inestimable, my confiding wife;—to mental guilt; to scenes of dalliance, and dangerous vows, menacing my peace hereafter, and embittering every hour I live with alarm of conse-

quences, and with the stern reproaches of the monitor within me."

Then again, in some sudden caprice of his distracted thoughts, the power of Lady Marian preponderated, and he remembered his engagement to her for dancing; and fearing the period of fulfilling it might have arrived, and his absence have awakened uneasiness in her adoring bosom, he hastened from the fort, every step accumulating in speed, as memory too presented him with the engagement of Adelaide with the duke; and he wished to be present whilst she danced with him.

From the circumstance of all the military in the neighbourhood attending this ball, not more than half of them could procure partners; therefore the inactive number, amounting to a formidable body, were collected near the door when Bouverie returned, and rather impeded a free regress; but the moment he entered, perceiving Lady Marian in the set of dancers still the partner of Colonel Redoubt, he found he had arrived in good time, and therefore made no attempt to stem the *opposing* assemblage; as here, amid this

throng, he had a full view up the room, and could reconnoitre those he wished to make observation of.

Two very young men of Bouverie's regiment, one a Cornet Sykes, lately joined, the other a Lieutenant Northland, were standing a little before him; and not perceiving him, continued the conversation they were engaged in without scruple.

"Sir, I say," continued Northland, "ours is the most d—lish regiment that ever luckless man got into; all so temperate, so confoundedly healthy, there is not a chance of rapid promotion for you. We are never so fortunate to lose an officer, except in battle; where, as we never flinch, there is a delicious chance of a lucky mortality for the survivors. Why, sir, I am two years in the regiment, and look where I am—at the very tail of the lieutenants, and no prospect of matters mending; for there now is Buck, whom I built sure hopes would tip off, through excess in eating; but, confound the fellow! his Charybdis of an appetite seems but to nourish him the more."

"Nay, I do not agree with you," returned

Sykes, "for I was examining his countenance after dinner to-day, and I really think his cheeks get hollow, and his eyes glassy; and these are famous symptoms."

"Well, positively I thought so too myself," rejoined the other, "but feared I was only flattering myself with false hopes, as I have done this some time, that a certain gallant gay Lothario would be removed by a certain general's retributive pistol: but no such luck for us; that sot drinks himself into an insensate, who can neither see, hear, nor understand."

"Oh! well," cried Sykes, "but I am satisfied to miss promotion by that means; since I am sure Lothario is a good fellow, from the little I have seen of him; and am certain we should like him if that Circe would permit him to come amongst us."

"Ay, I believe all that; but then, by what I allude to, the promotion of his lovely wife would be ensured as well as ours. She would soon rise in rank too."

Bouverie could with pleasure have terminated the existence of this last speaker, *for his appalling* allusion, with the pistol he

wished levelled at him; and the natural sweetness of his temper was beginning to give way, and rising bitterness to prompt a reproof, when Lady Marian's laboured performance commenced now as last couple, and called off his attention, and rivetted it solely on her; and on her he delightedly gazed, although he saw her movements were studied and unnatural to her, yet in every turn they displayed to unimpeded view the fine contour of her exquisitely finished form; and the inthralment of infatuating passion seemed again to enslave his senses, until the magic spell received a threatening shock by the lively fancies of the before offending young men.

"Zounds!" Northland exclaimed, on the loud report of a harp-string breaking, "is that the promoting pistol I talked of?"

"No," cried Sykes dryly, "'tis old Marian's tendons snapping in this conflict of exertion.—*Morbleu!* we must make a bier of our sabres to carry her out on."

Bouverie with pleasure could have kicked him out; but feeling a little sheepish at this humiliating remark, he thought he should only subject her and himself to fur-

ther ridicule if he noticed this irrision to them; when Thornley, who was standing before them, heard the sneer; and joining in their risibility at it, he soon added his ludicrous fancies to theirs; and Bouverie's ears were assailed by the grating sound of "Old Marian! Mother Harley! and Ninon de l'Enclos!" batted from one to the other, as they amused themselves with depicting the torments she would suffer from cramps, through thus exerting her stiffening sinews within an inch of her life, to rival the loveliest combination of Hebe, the Graces, and Terpsichore, that had ever glided on ethereal wings through dancing measure.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Bouverie now broke from the vicinity of these quizzing youngsters, who thought beauty hobbling off the stage on crutches after twenty-five, and hastened to a station to be in readiness to attend upon his fair infatuator; where, as he stood, the ridicule he just had heard levelled at the age of Lady Marian, operating on his mind, he began to feel less pleasure in looking on her;—began to feel a conviction that she had never appeared to less advantage; and that she certainly was a little stiff, and far from agile; and that he should admire her more if she affected less.

In this train of thought was Bouverie, when suddenly, by the almost instantaneous dispersion of the dancers, he beheld his wife on the opposite side of the room, seated before Lady Melcombe, and between the Duke of St. Kilda and Lord Woodley; the former with eyes rivetted on the ground, the latter with his gazing

in unequivocal admiration upon the beautiful countenance of Adelaide, who, on her part, seemed dejected; and all three appeared silent, and absorpt in their own meditations, until Adelaide addressed the duke, and apparently with some little hesitation; when his grace changed colour, and, after a moment's pause of evident discomposure, he started from his seat, and replied to her with a most winning aspect; when Adelaide, brightly blushing, raised her eyes, and, with a smile and look of transcendent sweetness and animated pleasure, made a short response, and the duke moved towards the door.

The expression of Adelaide's countenance, as she looked up at the duke, thrilled in terror to the heart of Bouverie, and taught his frame to vibrate with agitation; when darting forward with the promptly formed intention of taking his grace's vacated seat, to learn, if possible, a clew to what he had witnessed, his agony was changed to widely different sensations; for the duke, on perceiving him as he emerged from shade, flew towards him, and catching his arm, exclaimed—

"Thus I seize the delinquent, who has despoiled a tender bosom of all enjoyment in this scene of gayety. Oh! happy, happy Bouverie! to possess the power of life, or death, over the peace of Adelaide! In this moment, overpowered feeling obtained the ascendency over reluctance to betray her tender apprehensions; and she inquired from me, how she could obtain intelligence of you, who had quitted the room a long time since, looking extremely pale, and she greatly feared you were unwell: and when I told her that I would seek you, oh! what a look of gratitude I obtained!"

At this moment they reached the anxious Adelaide, who, with blushing bashfulness at having betrayed her feelings, expressed her gratitude to the duke, for so kindly removing her apprehensions; but not one word could she utter to Montagu, or even look her joy at seeing her alarms had been unfounded; so totally had Lord Woodley's raillery upon the subject subdued her courage: however, Bouverie, grateful for anxiety so unmerited by him, took the vacant seat beside her; and the duke retired to a distance, to conceal that painful emotion

such threatened destruction to his hopes excited.

In a tone of unequivocal tenderness, that recalled at once the drooping animation of Adelaide's spirits, Bouverie expressed his concern at having caused her one moment of uneasiness by his absence; he had found the room insupportable, and had merely strolled out upon the fort, to catch the refreshing sea breezes."

"And now, like the refreshing sea breezes, your presence comes to reanimate your lovely and most loving *sposa's* bloom and cheerfulness," exclaimed Lord Woodley, smiling,—who now launched forth into a highly coloured portraiture "of Adelaide's distress at his absence, which had stamped her aspect with so touching a character of despair, that they had all been panic-struck; not in the least suspecting it to be the green and yellow melancholy of pining love, that fed on her care-worn cheek, for the momentary absence of a husband;" and then, with a higher flight into the ludicrous, delineated "all the successless efforts the Duke of St. Kilda and *himself* had made, to recall her abstracted

thoughts to them, and to lure her from that mental misery which was consuming the fire of her youth, the blossoms of her transcendent charms."

Lord Woodley had his own motives for thus bantering our heroine upon her affection for her husband.—His lordship was a determined libertine; and the charms of Adelaide were hurrying him on to form chimerical plans, in unison with his wishes; as, from the moment he beheld her at church, he had resolved she should be his; then building his hopes upon the calumny in circulation; now, upon her husband's notorious devotion to Lady Marian: and as a promising foundation for his air-built structure was the force of ridicule, to rally her out of her affection to her husband; which, from her sensitive bashfulness, and Bouverie's chilling neglect, he thought it not improbable might take effect; as he had often before proved successful, in laughing the victims he had devoted to his wiles, out of fancied, or slight attachments.

With Adelaide his lordship was so far successful, as, by awakening her shame at

betraying her feelings of tenderness for Montagu, that she secretly determined to conceal them, in future, from the possibility of detection: but upon Bouverie the effect of his plan operated very differently from his intention; for his lordship here presented sweet incense to the husband's vanity, portrayed for him how one of the most lovely, most admired, young women in existence, had betrayed her tender affection for him by the most flattering publicity; and gave conviction to the truth of that attachment upon which the insinuations of Lady Marian had thrown the shadow of suspicion: and as similar incense in the betrayed and avowed strength of Lady Marian's passion had proved one of the most potent bulwarks of her power over him; so now, by the aid of this lurking—never visible—vanity in the mind of Bouverie, the cause of his wife acquired new force.

It was now Lady Maria Melcombe's turn to call a dance: her ladyship took her place, and the *corps de ballet* were summoned to their post; Bouverie was therefore fated to quit the place of safety, by

his wife, to encounter the perilous spells of his enchantress; and that wife to become the temporary partner of the man whom, of all the world, her husband most feared the influence of.

Lord Woodley would not give up his enamoured contemplation of our heroine's fascinating charms, to join the dancers this set; and by his inactive station contrived, each possible opportunity, to interrupt her short intervals of conference with the duke; to the great annoyance of his grace, but to the infinite relief of Adelaide: for although the duke's conversation was rigidly confined to such themes as propriety could sanction his addressing to the wife of another; yet still they were delivered in tones, which carefully betrayed the tenderness he cherished for her; and in the policy of his hopes and views not once permitting her to forget that it was an impassioned lover, heart-rived by disappointment, who conversed on unimportant subjects; so that, embarrassed and distressed, poor Adelaide felt every interruption a relief: nor was her inquietude, from this obtruded conviction of the duke's weakly cherished, yet pro-

foundly respectful passion for her, diminished, by observing herself an object of almost undeviating attention to her husband, whose jealousy of the duke, she doubted not, had been awakened by his wily partner; from whose similar kind offices she feared pain to poor Montagu's mind, and grief to her own, would be inflicted, through present occurrences; not once suspecting the often recurring gaze of her husband proceeded from the impulse of approbation; pleased to rapture with a deportment which conveyed conviction to his mind, that the sublimity of Adelaide's purity, of Adelaide's discretion, defied the power of mortal to subdue.

At length Adelaide's two dances with the Duke of St. Kilda were terminated; and Lady Marian had made but feeble progress in weakening the glowing beams of admiring tender approbation, which now warmed the heart of Bouverie towards Adelaide; whose hand, eagerly sought by every man in the room worth dancing with, fell, through priority of engagement, for the two succeeding dances, to Captain *Hope, of* Bouverie's regiment; and as it

was Adelaide's turn, now, to commence the amusement, Lady Marian, leaning on the arm of Bouverie, and with affected carelessness, walked towards the top of the room, where our heroine, with Ladies Clarinda and Jemima Melcombe, stood, waiting for the joining of the assembling column.

"Who is going to call this dance, Lady Clarinda; and what is it to be?" exclaimed the deep designer, pretending ignorance.

"Mrs. Bouverie is to call the dance; but its name has not yet transpired, I believe," replied Lady Clarinda.

"Mrs. Bouverie's call!—then, St. Kilda's reel it will be, beyond a doubt," replied Lady Marian gayly, though in a tone lowered, as if meant to approach a whisper.

But, so far did it fall short of that approach, that it was heard distinctly by all the group collected near; and, above all, by the timid, sensitive Adelaide herself; who, with the spontaneous blush and tearful eyes of wounded delicacy, darted to her husband, caught his arm with tremulous grasp, and clinging to that, raised her humid glances to his respondently eager

ones, with a look so mildly eloquent, in supplication for his protection from insulting innuendos, so expressive of every feeling now awakened in her mind, that his heart, thrilling with this resistless appeal, felt every pulse of tenderness and admiration in a tumult; and, with affection's gentle pressure of her hand, and a smile of approving delight, that struck with the poisoned stiletto of jealousy's alarm to the bosom of Lady Marian, he said—

"Shall I tell Lady Marian Harley you will have great pleasure, *my* Adelaide, in obliging her, by dancing St. Kilda's reel; since you conclude it is a favourite of hers, by her ladyship so kindly reminding you of it?"

"If you please, Montagu, and that Captain Hope has no objection to it," Adelaide tremulously replied, nearly subdued by gratitude.

Bouverie, with an audible voice, from the very centre of the room ordered St. Kilda's reel, desiring the band to play it with care and spirit; then seeking the duke, took his arm, and returned in easy *converse* with him, to give confidence to

his agitated wife for the commencement of her undertaking; who, although so shocked and distressed by the invidiousness of Lady Marian, the conduct of her husband on the occasion had proved a cordial of such renovating efficacy, that it exhilarated her spirits to the highest altitude of joy and gladness; and, almost wild with the innovation of happiness, she began the dance, forgetting its distressing name, with an animation responding to its lively measure; when Lady Marian, warily watchful, beholding with terror the rapture kindling in Bouverie's countenance, as he gazed on his wife, maliciously exclaimed—

"This dance seems to have inspired Mrs. Bouverie with sympathetic animation."

"And to inspire *Mr.* Bouverie too," returned Montagu with quickness, "for I cannot resist its influence. Come, Mrs. Warren, you who have always spirits in unison with mirthful harmony, take pity on me, and allow me to unite in this delightfully merry measure."

And, without looking at one of the angry or the supplicating glances which

shot or meltingly beamed from Lady Marian's eyes, he caught the hand of Mrs. Warren, a gay pretty young Dutchwoman, wife to one of General Harley's *aides-de-camp*, who unresistingly flew off with him to join the dancers; where, in the displeasure he felt at the invidious remark of Lady Marian, he exerted himself as if his whole heart was in his employment, nor once omitted an opportunity of pressing the hands of Adelaide, or to whisper her, or smile affectionately upon her in their *en passant* meetings.

Meanwhile Lady Marian was left a prey to all that rage of jealousy, and alarm of losing the lover she adored, that could agitate a woman whose passions scarcely knew the dominion of control; and, in all the panic of desperation, she hastily convened her thoughts, to counsel upon what yet she could contrive to preserve to herself this beloved object of her ardent passion, and to save from annihilation her long cherished project of at length becoming Countess of De Moreland, and revelling in wealth, which her extravagance left it no longer

in the power of her hated husband to bestow upon her.

She now most clearly perceived that Bouverie would not suffer the shadow of a suspicion to be glanced at his wife, uttered so undisguisedly as her innuendos had inadvertently been that evening; she therefore now felt conviction she must perform her mining projects more artfully, and to strain every nerve to devise schemes to withdraw the husband from the society of this dangerous wife; whose enchantments she saw menaced her total overthrow, were they but allowed uninterrupted power to act.

In the hasty outlines of plans imagined in these few moments of intense cogitation, Lady Marian flew to Adelaide the moment St. Kilda's reel was terminated, to commence her newly-formed project of innovating politeness to her, to subvert the resentment-inspired dangerous attentions of Montagu to her; and began her new system by thanking her, with the most conciliating sweetness, for her kind presents of the rarest viands; nor could the effront-

ery of her ladyship permit her to revert to those presents without a blush, through the recollection of how these gifts had been disposed of.

The sources which drained the purse of Lady Marian, to shield her from the infamy she had well merited, not only led her to the wiles of drawing money from Bouverie, upon the invented tales of her imprudent benevolences overwhelming her with distress: nor did these secret drains allow her to stop even here; they led her to all the sharper's tricks of ways and means; and taught her meanness at the card-table; and in every direction which, ere her deeply-cultivated intimacy with her first vices, she would have recoiled in horror from: and, amongst her meannesses, the supplies from Roscoville were sold to the Bexhill messmen, and at Hastings; whilst her conviction of Bouverie's carelessness upon the subject of eating, led her to hazard this disposition of these presents: but when she found herself undeceived in this belief, by his inquiry, "If such things had not been delivered at Marino from Castle Cottage?" she was compelled

to the further meanness, the further crime, of inventing falsehoods, to excuse the non-appearance of these viands at her table.

Lady Marian's next manœuvre for lulling the resentment of Bouverie, was most cordially to invite his wife to dinner at Marino the succeeding day, which Adelaide politely declined; for she had long determined to refuse the first invitation she received from Lady Marian; nor by a too speedy relaxation of a little dignified stateliness, seem too promptly to intermingle with a society which had spun out their avoidance of her until it had assumed the rude aspect of insulting, studied neglect: and for this refusal Bouverie internally applauded her.

Colonel Redoubt, in the name of himself and corps, invited Mrs. Bouverie to join their *petit soupé*, excusing the lateness of the invitation, by their really not before knowing that Colonel Bouverie was a votary of Hymen; an invitation which Adelaide, with all her conciliating sweetness, declined, upon the plea of belonging to Lady Melcombe's party, with which she must therefore necessarily return.

The demons of Lady Marian's iniquitous projects were now on many of their missions. She had with lynx-eyed observation noted the admiration of Lord Woodley for Adelaide; she knew he was a libertine, for she had been his early preceptress; and from this circumstance her intimacy with his parents had been terminated. The subtile poisons which lay in this young man's conversation, she believed, as she hoped, would convey their pernicious influence into the mind of her rival, and dispose it, if not for his own purposes, at least for those of the Duke of St. Kilda; and therefore to the society, and artfully managed undermining principles of this young libertine, she wished most earnestly to expose poor Adelaide: and for this purpose she directed her lures to the vanity of Lord Melcombe's younger son.

The Hon. Lysander Melcombe, from an unfortunate accident in his childhood, had grown up to manhood in striking deformity of figure; but Nature, kind in supplying him with resources for amusement, had gifted him with strong genius for poetry and painting; but in the latter he most

particularly excelled; possessing the happy talent of taking the most correct resemblances, without requiring the individual to sit for his attempt at likeness;—and as in him personal vanity could find no field, it all seemed to centre in triumph at his surpassing talents; and to this self-applauding consciousness of perfection, Lady Marian now levelled her shafts of deep design; and, with her soft insinuating address, fired his imagination with the universal fame he should acquire, by surprising the admiring world with a portrait striking in resemblance, and animated as life, of the most beautiful young creature in existence, Mrs. Bouverie; who, from a sentimental anecdote relative to her parents, had determined never to allow her portrait to be taken.

"A most fortunate opportunity," she informed him, "to realize this happy thought of hers, now lay before him, could he prevail upon his mother to invite this superlative beauty to spend at Melcombe Park the period of Colonel Bouverie's absence from home; who, she had just learned, was going on the morrow with

the general, for about a week, to visit the military works along the coast in his district."

Lysander, now fired to enthusiastic rapture at the anticipation of this sure path to a higher flight of well-earned fame, flew off to impart to his mother his project, and his wish for an invitation to be immediately given to Mrs. Bouverie for the period of her husband's absence.

The calamity of this young man had so fastened upon the pitying tenderness of his parents, that from the hour it occurred, his comfort, his happiness, seemed the first object of their lives: this wish, therefore, was no sooner intimated to his mother, than conveyed to his father, when they both hastened to Montagu and Adelaide, and made their invitation with so much winning cordiality, that it could not meet a negative.

Bouverie now apologized for the impelled delay to his returning the visit, which his lordship had done him the honour that morning to make him, by this unexpected arrangement of General Harley's to visit *military* works; which only within the

last few minutes had he even heard was in contemplation.

But this arrangement Bouverie could not well have known one moment sooner, as the general was in total ignorance of it himself; since it was the sudden one of Lady Marian, for her own purposes; and who, by her wily machinations, persuaded her husband to adopt it.

At length the moment for the Melcombe party to depart arrived; Bouverie attended Adelaide to her carriage; lamented his arrangement to attend the late supper; promised to breakfast with her on the morrow; and, with a tender pressure of her hand, he parted from her, to take his dangerous station in the magic circle of the enchantress, who was forming every spell for his undoing.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

As several of the ladies who attended this supper of the Z—— militia had some distance to travel home, the party broke up much earlier than had been expected; and Bouverie, when seated by the alluring Marian at her tea table at Marino, (for her ladyship always contrived some delaying flirting trap, after her return from balls and revels,) soon, too soon, found the blandishments of Lady Marian chasing poor Adelaide once more from the first place in his thoughts: yet, when her ladyship permitted her obsequious court to break up, and separate for the night, he found out a thousand inconveniences in his apartments at Marino, which he had never discovered before in them.

"This is the most wretchedly dreary room I ever undressed in, Lee!" he at length exclaimed: "I cannot conceive why it is so; but, although three times the *size of my own* little dressing-room at the

cottage, it is not one half quarter so commodious.—Here, every thing is a mile from one's reach; there, all is at hand;—all is neatness,—all is comfort."

"Yet it was but a sad place, when my mistress took compassion on us, sir," replied Lee, "and gifted it with comforts."

"And adornments too," said Bouverie; "for, oh! how she converted it into sweet fancy's bower! how beautifully she arranged the vases!—I dare say, Lee, nay I am sure, was I at home to-night, her attentive affection would have hailed me with the sweet incense of the choicest flowers."

"There are flowers in this room, *sir*," replied Lee, scarcely able to suppress a laugh of pleasure at their having escaped his master's observation.

"Oh! beastly things!" responded Bouverie disdainfully: "A vilely selected beaupot, of gaudy hideousness, more vilely arranged by the red sprawling claws of that strapping Molly!"

"It was Lady Marian herself who gathered and placed them here, sir," said Lee, with gravity he could with difficulty preserve.

Bouverie blushed to the deepest tints of the damask roses these beaupots contained: he bit his lips, in vexation; and turned from the candles, to conceal his shame, for thus having so ungratefully profaned the taste and tender attention of his adoring Marian.

"Lady Marian," he at length said, anxious to expunge these direful reflexions he had so unwittingly thrown upon her taste; "Lady Marian is a woman of such superior talents, Lee; her mind is so enriched by science, so engaged by its luxuriant cultivation, that it cannot stoop to little things; it cannot condescend to bestow its precious moments on the selection of appropriate colours for fancy's *bouquet*; and it is so rarely she finds time to perform these *petit* feminine occupations in her house, that it is no wonder her not excelling in them."

"I thought, sir," said Lee, "my mistress was a young lady of great talents, great learning, and great accomplishments, too."

"So she is, Lee," replied Bouverie, with energy; "of great, of transcendent talents,

of wonderful, of unequalled acquirements, for her years.—But she possesses more activity of mind and frame than Lady Marian;—and—and, always living in the country, she has acquired a taste for natural beauties, as well as for her profound studies."

"And yet, sir," said Lee, "she has no mind that others should be the wiser about her studies, although she is: for many a time I have seen her hide her books of learning under the sofa cushions, and catch up some trumpery bit of work, when company was coming unexpectedly in upon her; and I am sure it was by the merest accident I discovered how learned she was in the stars; for she found Dennis and myself one day in Mr. Falkland's library, lost in wonder at what a machine we saw there could be for; and Dennis taking the liberty of asking her, 'If it was for the new invention called galvanism?' she, with the most ready sweetness, showed us its purposes, and explained all, sir, as cleverly and clearly as if she was reading it to us out of a book; and managed all the machinery as if she had made

Mr. Falkland's orrery herself: and when we expressed our wonder that she could know so much, and that men could have invented such machinery, she turned our thoughts to higher wonders—to the Power who had created all that was humbly represented there."

Bouverie, by this time nearly undressed, hurried to dismiss Lee, without a comment upon this anecdote of the orrery, for his feelings were overpowered: his conscience, too, obtruded with the torturing reflexion, that the fascinations of Lady Marian had lured him almost into unworthiness, which never, never could consort with the pure soul of Adelaide.

But on his pillow, strewed by the thorns of Marian's seductive wiles and his own unresisting weakness, the head of Bouverie lay—not rested, for banished sleep left him to the full career of his reflexions; to the contrariety of passions which rived his heart; the sore conflict between the triumph of virtuous or illicit love: but, as often as the demons who supported the cause of Marian painted her enchantments in all their alluringly deceptive colours to

his diseased imagination, some guardian spirits, not quite worn out by unsuccessful vigil, presented Adelaide in the pure robes of her transcendent virtues to his view.

And the oftener this sacred vision of spotless innocence recurred, the more kindly he welcomed it; the more, with raptures augmented, he reviewed the events of the past evening; and Adelaide, admired to almost enthusiasm's adulation, appeared more sublimated still, as in his retrospection she passed the ordeal of this test of youthful vanity, and while tasting thus the intoxicating cup of flattery, preserved the meek humility of sober reason; and when presented the still as alluring, though more pernicious, bowl of subtile gallantry's infusions, pushed it from her with the determined hand of heart-nerved chastity.

A full hour ere Bouverie had taught his wife to expect him on the morrow, he was at her cottage; yet he found her already dressed with her accustomed elegance and neatness.

Adelaide had retired to rest in the glowing sunbeams of promised future happiness, emanating from her husband's conduct to

her at the ball; and the refreshing slumbers of Hope's obtaining for her, had given such renovated tints of loveliness to her aspect, that Bouverie, when he beheld her, lured by his admiration as he gazed, exclaimed—

"When I return from this annoying excursion, I will no longer dance attendance upon the general, to remedy the errors of that giddy Thornley, but will get leave of absence, and fly off with you to surprise Mrs. Falkland, by joining her party in Scotland."

The blushes of joy expanded on the cheeks of Adelaide with the most roseate brilliancy; her eyes sparkled like precious gems; her smiles dimpled with increasing sweetness; her heart bounded and beat to almost auricular detection; and yet she could scarcely believe the evidence of her senses, that her husband had uttered such auspicious news for her.

Neither Montagu nor Adelaide had much appetite for breakfast; but the little the latter had sat down with was soon destroyed, and the roses withered on her cheeks, as by the blight of the sirocco; and hope

was chilled in its full glow, by the intelligence which her husband, with hesitating embarrassment, conveyed, soon after they were seated at the breakfast table.

"I scarcely ever was more annoyed, than by this sudden freak of the general to view these works," said Bouverie; "since I am never left one moment in your society, Adelaide, that it does not awaken anxiety to continue in it: and now, when you have emerged from your seclusion, and that even while compelled to aid that cub Thornley, I might have you almost constantly of the parties I engaged in, it is very hard to be separated."

"But a week will soon glide away, Montagu; and when you return," said Adelaide, smiling, "my stateliness to Lady Marian Harley will have completed the performance of its duty, and then I shall no longer refuse her invitations, or delay mine to her."

"A week!" said Bouverie, despondingly; "but am I sure it will be one week of absence?—From Lee's intelligence, I fear it will be extended, as—as he learned from Mrs. Coleman this morning, 'That her

lady, with her friends Mrs. Gayville and Mrs. Warren, purpose surprising the general by following him, and by promoting parties at each place we visit, make the excursion so pleasant as to lure the general to extend it; as Lady Marian thinks it might benefit his health.'—But let this compulsatory absence be lengthened or not, you will beguile it, my Adelaide, for me, as much as possible, by writing to me every day a journal of your proceedings; and thus, by the delusions of your animated pen, I may sometimes fancy I am with you."

"And you, Montagu, will write to me as often as your numerous avocations will permit you," faltered out the terrorized wife; who, with memory's inflicting wounds, knew that her husband's painful reluctance at quitting her might prove no security that the influence of Lady Marian's magic would prove powerless.

"Adelaide," said Bouverie, "every letter I receive from you shall be promptly answered; therefore, upon yourself depends the frequency of hearing from your miserable husband."

Bouverie felt that he was what he pronounced himself. His reason, his heart's best feelings, prompted the firm wish of Adelaide's rising power to increase, until its firmness could defy an overthrow; and, like Adelaide, he feared; like her, he trembled; until at length he determined to feign some plausible excuse, and send it off in apology to General Harley for non-attendance: but, while ruminating upon what in possibility that excuse could be, his pride, influenced by the demons of Lady Marian's power, arose indignant at the supposition, "that in the present state of his mind, so impressed with Adelaide's perfections, and with strong conviction of the criminality of allowing his passion for Lady Marian to remain unexterminated; that he could be so pusillanimous as to allow her unrestrained fondness to subdue his now fixed determination, to represent to her the horrors of the precipice upon which they both now blindly stood:" and, under the vanity-inspired belief, that he could now most magnanimously resist every temptation, and persuade, by his arguments—which would find potent auxi-

liaries in the chaste principles of her own bosom — Lady Marian to sacrifice her love at the shrine of rectitude, he resolved to brave the danger, and gave up the wiser project of shunning it.

But, although fully confident of returning to Adelaide as much devoted to her as he now was, Bouverie's reluctance to leave his wife was almost as painful as that he prophetically experienced on quitting her at Twickenham: and although, as every moment passed on, that reluctance to depart increased, those moments at length passed on to the inevitable one of separation; and Bouverie, after repeated embraces of augmenting tenderness, quitted, with genuine sorrow, his heart-rived Adelaide; who, the moment her straining eyes could no longer behold his retreating form, fled to her chamber, to give relief to her overcharged feelings, by floods of bitter tears at menaced happiness; which ceased not to flow, until necessity compelled her to preparations for her immediate removal to Melcombe Park.

Nothing could surpass the kind cordial-

ity with which Lord and Lady Melcombe received our heroine in their hospitable mansion; where she, accompanied by Obearn, arrived that day, previous to dinner; when a dejection, awakened by her apprehensions of Lady Marian's spells, and which no effort of hers could succeed in banishing wholly from her aspect, soon became visible to Lord Woodley; who, promptly divining the cause, failed not, the first opportunity, to rally her upon it, as the melancholy of her love-sick heart, pining in anguish for a whole week's absence from her *caro sposo.*

This style of raillery was, as his lordship expected, most peculiarly distressing to the delicate feelings of Adelaide; who was soon compelled by it to assume a gayety foreign to her trembling heart: but not in this way only did Lord Woodley annoy her; for his assiduities, even on this first day of her commencing inmate of his father's house, she found oppressive to her; nor could the dignified propriety of her manners succeed in repelling him to the style of attentions suited to a married woman; for still his conduct adopted the

tone and manner of a commencing wooer to a disengaged heart.

Adelaide found the same party inmates at Melcombe Park she had dined with the preceding day:—the noble family of the mansion; the two Misses Price, between the younger of whom and Lord Woodley, his parents and the young lady herself had long been aiming to promote an union; Lord Ennismore; and Sir Edward Fitzallen: the latter of whom, the apparent lover of Lady Clarinda, had ceased to receive, since the preceding evening, the smiles of encouragement from her ladyship, since her admiration had been powerfully awakened at the ball by the Duke of St. Kilda's fine exterior, and seducing manners; while her ambition, influenced by his bewitching coronet and immense property, had determined her to speculative angling for his heart; and as she knew herself to be extremely handsome, well educated, and universally admired; and that her parents, anxious to marry off their four elder daughters, before the following four, who were bursting from their nursery's inthralment, were necessarily transplanted to the

public parterre, would gladly, by invitations to Melcombe Park, throw this coveted conquest in the way of her captivation, she doubted not of succeeding.

And in concord with her speculating designs, her ladyship had manœuvred to engage her parents to go this very evening of Adelaide's commenced visit, to hear the bands play at Bexhill; a manœuvre she took care to perform before the Duke of St. Kilda, who had called in the morning; and who, on his part, knowing that Mrs. Bouverie was to be their visitor for a week, most earnestly and successfully pressed his suit to Lord and Lady Melcombe, to honour him by taking their tea, after parade, in a marquee he had had pitched in a most commanding situation upon the cliffs; and where he hoped often to have the happiness of entertaining them during the present auspicious weather.

To Bexhill, therefore, Adelaide found herself compelled to go, in the train of Lord and Lady Melcombe; but where every assiduity of the Duke of St. Kilda, or any other man who welcomed the appearance of Mrs. Bouverie there, was

precluded, by the determined attentions of Lord Woodley; until Miss Stella Price, in alarm, informed Lord Melcombe—

"That she should shortly expect to hear of Colonel Bouverie's calling Lord Woodley out, for his marked attentions to his lovely wife."

Lord Melcombe now became an attentive observer; who, soon penetrating what was passing in his son's mind, called him off to a severe lecture, upon conduct so direfully reprehensible in every point of view; and from which nothing flattering even to his vanity could accrue, since the lovely object of his libertine pursuit recoiled from his assiduities as she would from the horror of contagion.

The only being whom Lord Woodley stood in awe of, was his father; and to his admonitions he either paid the respect of being corrected by, or wearing the semblance of bowing submissively to them: he therefore now, though secretly determined that nothing should induce him to relinquish the pursuit of this fascinating, neglected wife; and to carry on his *manœuvres* secure in future from his father's

observation—expressed feigned sorrow for what, he said, he had scarcely himself been aware he meditated; and giving his father an insincere promise of desisting from such misconduct, he turned his devoirs, for the remainder of the evening, to their ready receiver, Stella Price; leaving it now in the power of his grace and brother officers to pay a portion of their anxious attentions to the attractively interesting Adelaide.

But not like the assiduities of Lord Woodley were his grace's to the venerated object of his adoration:—his were offered in the very essence of respect; only occasionally, not exclusively; and every word examined for its propriety, lest it should offend: while only by his voice, his well taught voice, or his amenable eyes, instructed accurately to steal their betraying homage, as if against the struggling precepts of his honour, could Adelaide know, that love, without the lamp of hope, still warmed the bosom of St. Kilda for her.

When the bands of this garrison had ceased their usual performance upon the parade, the duke, with gallant grace, pre-

sented his arm to Lady Melcombe, with whom our heroine was linked, and led off the chaperon of the party, followed by a numerous procession, to his marquee, which was finely placed to command an extended view of the wide expanse of waters that rolled in perpetual measure before it; and in this marquee was now laid out, with great care and taste, every elegant and expensive viand which propriety sanctioned for such a light repast:—the band of his own regiment, stationed in a cavity of the adjoining cliff, in an admirable position to give the effect of fancy-charming echo, in soft respondent melody; while a beautiful yacht, fully manned by mariners handsomely and uniformly attired, was stationed beneath the cliff, with another martial band placed in it, to give the aid of music from the water to his grace's anxiety to entertain the fair guest in whom his every wish to please was centred.

All without the marquee breathed harmony, and all within it seemed to do so too; and as the yacht attracted, and was *honoured with*, eulogium, the duke pro-

posed an excursion in it on the morrow, as an early tide would afford them a longer day of happiness together; and requested that all present would honour him with their company in his little bark, weather permitting, on the following morning.

Lady Clarinda, in ecstasy at the proposition, accepted the delightful invitation for them all, ere her parents could give articulation to their gracious assent; and Adelaide, although trembling at such an unfortunate chain of circumstances drawing her into the society of the Duke of St. Kilda in the absence of her husband; yet, as the guest of those respected individuals in whose protection Montagu had left *her*, she could form no plea for offering her negative to join the party.

At length the bugles and drums at the barracks sounding the retreat, reminded Lord Melcombe that a return to his quarters was necessary; and, in consequence, his party soon after bidding adieu to their noble and attractive entertainer, returned to Melcombe Park.

The night of Adelaide was spent (like many a hapless one since her marriage,) in

tears, and pious invocations to Heaven, to save her husband from crime; and to spare her peace, by the restoration of his affections to her; and, as the rising sun found her waking still on the restless pillow of apprehension's pointed thorns, she determined to arise and commence her diurnal despatch to Montagu; for she could not feel satisfied, until she had communicated to him how much into the Duke of St. Kilda's society she was likely to be thrown during her visit at Melcombe Park; and besides, too, she thought in addressing the effusions of her pen—not those, alas! of her heart; for they felt a chilling interdict to revealing themselves to the tenderly cherished idol of her bosom;—she should imbibe a fancied happiness; a magic cordial for tranquillizing her mind and aspect, to make her pass an undetected counterfeit of a happy being during the coming day.

Accordingly she did arise with the great luminary of day; and, without the assistance of the still sleeping Obearn, made her toilet of chaste taste and simple elegance; and then, after her steady, fervent perform-

ance of the first of human duties, she proceeded to write to Montagu every circumstance which had occurred since their recent separation; except the intimation of Lord Woodley's oppressive attentions; since in the communication of that there lay much peril.

The breakfast bell at length assembled the family to the morning repast; when Lysander, to the great surprise of his parents and sisters, announced his intention of not joining the marine party; for having now in his imagination a most happy resemblance of Mrs. Bouverie, he secretly determined instantly to set about the delineation of it, that he might have the advantage of every embellishment to it which her short stay at Melcombe Park could afford him.

## CHAPTER XIX.

At length the party set out for the place appointed for embarkation, all in the full hope of a cheerful, happy day; or of something accruing from it to the advancement of their projects, or the fulfilment of their wishes, except poor Adelaide; for she had no hopes, no prospects to be realized; since hers all centred in her absent husband; and she had no expectations from the day, but apprehension of its future effect upon the mind of Bouverie.

The duke received his eagerly expected guests from Melcombe Park on the beach; where planks covered with green baize were placed, to prevent the rough shingles, or damp sand, from incommoding his fair visitors; and his grace conducting Lady Melcombe, and requesting her lord to be the escort of Mrs. Bouverie, led the way to the boats, through a lane formed of as many of the Bexhill garrison as feared *not sickness* on the deep.

All being arranged for a speedy embarkation, the party was swiftly conveyed to the yacht; which commodiously accommodated all, except the musicians, who, through choice, were disposed of in two boats, the one to precede, the other to follow the yacht; and to give their alternate notes, at a distance, for the most pleasing effect.

The duke immediately took the helm, for the subtile policy of being near the object of his adoration, without an appearance of impropriety in effecting it; for he placed Lady Melcombe on his right hand, Adelaide on his left, leaving the other six ladies with the gentlemen, to arrange themselves according to their wishes; while, to secure the safety of his freight, he stationed a skilful pilot in the prow; from whose private signals he shaped his course.

But Lady Clarinda not exactly approving his grace's arrangement of places, by affecting apprehension of sickness, induced her mother to yield her hers, as the one most likely to be exempt from such an inconvenience.

By this manœuvre, Lady Clarinda's recovery was instantly effected; and the salubrious sea-breezes so exhilarated her spirits, that she seemed at once to become the essence of vivacity; exerting herself, by all the magic of playful conversation, *bon-mots*, arch sallies, and unconscious warblings to the accompanying melody, to fascinate the duke; who, though compelled to listen to her ladyship, and to smile when she expected him, and to reply when she wished, (yet not, perhaps, exactly as she wished,) had every thought rivetted on Adelaide; who, although dejected in heart, and inclined to the pensiveness of mental misery, yet, in urbanity-inspired cheerfulness, gave her powers occasionally, not unvaryingly like Lady Clarinda, to aid the gayety of her companions; and her sallies of gentle playfulness, her bursts of brilliancy in conversation, breaking through timidity's close veil, like the rays of the radiant sun through a genial shade of luxuriant foliage, was found more pleasing than the intense power of its unimpeded beams.

*All the* Ladies Melcombe, and the Misses

Price, sung extremely well; and they hesitated not, in compliance with the requests emanating from the intimation of Lord Ennismore, to aid the harmony of the day by their vocal exertions: but, although Adelaide had, by the management of Signore Philomelli, conquered, in a great degree, the impeding fears to her excellence, which nature and newness in exhibition had awakened; and that too perfect in judgment, too correct in taste, not to feel conscious, in defiance of the dictates of true merits, modesty, that her voice and style surpassed them all; she yet withstood the gentle intimations of the Duke of St. Kilda, "of how he longed for her to charm him voluntarily, as she had once done unconsciously at Beechbrook; when those sounds, which had thrilled on his ears, had never ceased to vibrate through his heart;" and her reluctance to comply once visible to him, he ceased to importune her, lest it should distress her; and no other person present ever having heard her, thought not of renewing a request once negatived by her; a negative inspired by the intuitive feeling, that if her voice had

power to charm the duke, it ought no more to sound for him; and that every possible allurement it might possess, ought to be hushed in eternal stillness, sooner than sound to add one stimulating impulse to the distressing admiration of Lord Woodley.

It was after a most cheerful and evidently highly relished repast, that the ladies had retreated from the elegantly fitted up cabin, where they had dined, to the drawing-room, the deck; where, as the glassy surface of the tranquil water permitted, they promenaded until, after a very short libation to Bacchus, the gentlemen joined them: however, short as it was, it unlocked the gates of strict caution his father's admonition had shut upon Lord Woodley's designs; who no sooner ascended the deck, than he flew to offer his arm to the fair Stella's ready acceptance; who was then walking with our heroine and Mr. Monro.

Monro was a highly informed man, with whom Adelaide soon fell into an interesting conversation; from which she was *suddenly called* by the fair Stella, to take

part with her in an argument she was engaged in with Lord Woodley, who was extenuating the conduct of a lady whose elopement from her husband had filled the papers of the preceding day; on the pretence, that her husband's notorious neglect of her, and devotion to another, pleaded effectually in her vindication.

"A singular mode of extenuation, I must confess," replied Adelaide gravely; "but the sophistry of it, I believe, would soon be proved to his lordship, was a judge at sessions to be informed by a female culprit, in her defence for the crimes she stood endited for, 'That her husband's neglect had driven her to commit theft; his attachment to another had impelled her to imbue her hands in the blood of a fellow being.'

"Nay, nay," returned Lord Woodley, eagerly; "these offences, amenable to penal laws, are not exactly in point."

"They class with the case in point, in that code of laws which was given us to guide our actions," said Monro, smiling.

"Antediluvian laws, which moderns disdain to practise!" said his lordship.

"Oh fie!" exclaimed Miss Stella, "to talk so irreverently, Woodley! Mrs. Bouverie, are you not shocked, and amazed, to hear him?"

"The latter sensation I own I do not experience," returned Adelaide.

"Why so?" demanded his lordship, laughing; and now breaking from Stella, to face them, continued his footfalls in retrogression.

"I saw your lordship at church."

"And was not my conduct there very edifying?"

"I only remarked your entrance."

"What did that evince? pray tell me."

"An absence of all recollection of how sacred was the place you were entering."

"Sweet, lovely, and inspired methodista! preach on, and I will listen to thee, for thou hast a right to preach, as thou art divine!" exclaimed his lordship.—"But do you know, that your observation of me in a church has made me the vainest of the vain? since there, I thought nothing temporal could attract your attention."

"For the gratification of your lordship's *vanity in this* instance," returned Adelaide,

smiling, "you are indebted to the audibility of your voice; which, I own, surprised me into observation of you."

Lord Woodley bit his lips, and with difficulty dispersed the lower of mortification gathering on his brow.—"You really seem in so ingenuous a mood, Mrs. Bouverie," said he, "that I doubt not being answered candidly, if I ask you, what you thought of me when your attention was so called?"

"What I thought of you!" replied Adelaide, smiling: "why, my prompt conclusion was, that you were some young Pagan come to see what sort of edifice Christians met in, to perform their public worship."

The fair Stella, infinitely more pleased with Adelaide's responses than his lordship was, resolved to encourage them, as the flatterer hope assured her, his alarming admiration of Mrs. Bouverie would promptly find an antidote in the indignant pride, the wounded vanity, of his lordship.

But it was something more triumphant to Adelaide than the wounds she inflicted on his vanity, which led his lordship, as

she finished her last sentence, to retreat to his position by the side of Stella; for conviction promptly whispered to him, "This enchanting being is innately pious; and, however neglected, however heart-rived by her miscreant husband, no man living will possess power to seduce her from that path her piety informs her is the one of rectitude."

Stella, to aid her own purposes, instantly recommenced their unfinished argument relative to the recent elopement; and Adelaide turning to renew her conversation with Monro, he smilingly said to her, in cautious tones:—

"You, who are mated, Mrs. Bouverie, must often derive amusement from the manœuvres of those who are not, to become so; and even fair and young ladies, I perceive, can condescend in this way.—Beside the indefatigable toil of your neighbour, the generalship of another lady, this day, has much amused me; a lady who disdains all covert attacks, but openly and valiantly has commenced the siege of St. Kilda.

*Adelaide* was perfectly aware of who he

alluded to; but feeling that it would be ill-natured to confess herself as another detector of these unreserved assailants, answered:—

"Your penetration enables you to make discoveries, which others cannot develop."

"Mine has not been put to the trouble of fathoming its depth, in either instance," he replied, smiling: "Lady Clarinda seems a most ingenuous young lady, who scorns all ambiguities; but I wonder she possesses no penetrating scouts, to assure her, after reconnoitring the citadel, that her project of taking it must prove a forlorn hope."

"As I know too little yet of Lady Clarinda to have acquired the just estimation of her excellence," said Adelaide, "I cannot decide, whether I ought to aspirate my wishes for or against her success in the siege you think she has commenced. The wife of the Duke of St. Kilda, I trust, may be the possessor of every requisite to make him happy, since I fully believe he merits it."

"Your belief is correct, Mrs. Bouverie," replied Monro: "I have known him from childhood; and a more amiable being is

not in existence. But the perfections, or imperfections, of Lady Clarinda, are now immaterial to him: his fate has been fixed by early disappointment; and he will never marry."

Adelaide's sensitive delicacy felt half offended with Monro for this allusion; whilst pity for the duke filled her eyes with its melting tears; as distress for having, though innocently and unintentionally, destroyed the peace, and the hoped-for wedded happiness, of an amiable being, pained her gentle bosom: and those eyes, thus filled, thus beaming with commiseration, turned on the duke at this moment; who was then, as ever, when he could accomplish it, gazing intently on her; and their expression electrified him; —his eyes instantly shot back rays of joyfully amazed, yet grateful tenderness; whilst the blushes of enraptured surprise mantled his before pale cheeks.

Adelaide, shocked and disconcerted at what her own inadvertence had thus delusively occasioned, now with a steady look of calmness gravely withdrew her eyes: *but, although* in that withdrawing, dis-

pleasure was evinced, it vanquished not hope in the now sanguinely palpitating bosom of his grace; for Adelaide had looked kindly, pityingly on him; and to cherish the expectation of his fond wishes, was the determination his heart now formed.

And his spirits, now exhilarated by the cordial of renovated hope, gave brilliancy to his before languid conversation; and inspired by the transporting anticipation of calling Adelaide his own, he became so animated, that Lady Clarinda began to cherish hopes too, and to build security of the success of her bold undertaking; since bold she acknowledged it to herself, as she was perfectly aware of his grace's attachment to Mrs. Bouverie, having heard it from Captain Clayton; yet that operated as no impediment; for she had known several instances, of where young women had, by their unfaltering perseverance, manœuvred themselves into first-rate matches; who, if they had not wooed their mates, would never have found the case reversed.

In short, she firmly believed no man could be wooed without being won; and no one was better qualified for this innova-

tion in the established mode of courtship; for she had cleverness, spirit, quick observation, an infinity of courage and perseverance; and, above all, possessed a stoical insensibility to every species of rebuff: she chose not to feel perception of.

Again the continued argument of Lord Woodley and the persevering Stella, was referred to Adelaide.

"Now do, Mrs. Bouverie," the fair Stella exclaimed, "assist me to lecture this terrible animal, who persists in the vindication of Lady Dingham."

"Nay, do not lecture; but candidly judge, dear Mrs. Bouverie!" said his lordship. "Only just for one moment conceive yourself to be Lady Dingham; a wife insulted by neglect almost from the hour of your marriage, by a husband whose whole time, with his affections, notoriously devoted to another; and thus neglected, thus insulted, another man, sincere and ardent in his adoration; superior, perhaps, to your husband in mental and personal attractions, leaves nothing unattempted, in the power of fervent love, to lure your heart from your unworthy husband; and—

"My lord!" said Adelaide firmly, "spare yourself the further inutile trouble of such an hypothesis, since I never can proceed upon your suggested suppositions.—I cannot, even in ideal flight, admit the possibility of any man being found superior to my husband in mental and personal attractions; nor can I suppose a man in existence so consummate in deluding vanity, as to stand forth in the visionary expectation of becoming the successful rival of Montagu Bouverie. I therefore, you see, Lord Woodley, can do nothing in sympathetic imagination towards the vindication of Lady Dingham: you had better, then, not appoint me for her judge; but try her by her peers; and as you are one of them*, she will stand a chance of a lenient sentence, perhaps in sympathy to her superlatively gifted seducer."

"Mrs. Bouverie!" exclaimed Lord Woodley in an undisguised tone of pique, "your countenance is the most deceitful

* Lord Woodley had been called to the House of Peers through political motives.

index to a work, that ever yet met the eye of man; for it portrays nothing but sweetness; and yet how severe you can be!"

"The rose portrays nothing but sweetness," returned Adelaide, with a smile; yet press it too harshly, and you will find it possesses thorns to wound!"

"Well," responded his lordship, "in sweetness or bitterness, I must confess you possess one extraordinary power: however you wound a man's vanity, or lash him from his adulation of you, still you compel him to increase of admiration and esteem."

The lively measure of a popular country dance, now played by the bands, inspired the young men with wild anxiety to pace its merry round; who applying to the duke for the realizing of their wishes, his grace obtained the assent of Lady Melcombe, who never negatived a pastime for young people, which propriety could sanction; when instantly Adelaide was called to, by Lady Clarinda, to open their ball; and with a lively air, veiling her speculating cunning, she playfully added—

"There is my papa expiring to foot it away in this dance; and you are too

sweetly compassionating, to disappoint his flight of juvenility; and not being of the blood royal, it would be too magnificent an air for him to dance with his wife, his children, or his adopted daughters."

Half the men on board wished her ladyship on shore for this unfair proposition, when they perceived Adelaide actually complying with it; and, gifted with the spirit of prompt reprisal, the duke instantly requested the honour of Lady Melcombe's hand, to follow the lively example her lord had set her: and her ladyship, grateful for all his attentions during the day, found it incompatible with her feelings of *politesse* to refuse; and, joining the dancing column, the post of honour was gladly resigned to her by her husband's beautiful partner.

Lady Clarinda, enraged at her mother's marring blunder, stood aghast at this disappointment to her project; but rapidly she found consolation in remembering how soon the two dances would terminate, and then her brother would have secured Adelaide, and she should be certain of the duke; but there again her flattering expec-

tation was foiled. Lord Woodley, to aim some retaliating shafts at Adelaide's vanity, engaged his mother to be his partner, and the duke eagerly obtained the treasure he panted for; since our heroine, though hurt and offended by his evident misinterpretation of her glance of pitying sorrow, knew not how to evince resentment, not absolutely called for, to the preserver of her life, the man whose peace she had destroyed.

Lady Clarinda's anger now arose against her brother: by her own family thus were all her efforts to be foiled;—by her own family Marplots, her speculation for becoming a duchess frustrated; and this idea gathered increasing strength, with augmenting ire, when for the next two dances she found her sister Maria the engaged partner of his grace: but for the succeeding two, she concluded, nothing could impede the realizing of her cruelly tortured expectations, since it would then be rudeness in the duke to pass her by, as he had seemed, with odious preciseness, to proceed alphabetically in his lesson from *eti-*

*quette;* and Lady Clarinda now wished every moment she spent in angrily footing the deck, in the fifth and sixth dances, with Sir Edward Fitzallen, annihilated from the progress of time.

At length these two obnoxious dances were ended, and Lady Clarinda's heart began to caper in hope's gayest measure; when her father, in the family combination against her, proclaimed it time to direct their course homewards.

In vain Lady Clarinda internally pouted; the odiously flippant Monro, in professional annoyance, put in his word, prophesying colds to them all, if they danced longer on the water, now the sun was sinking below the horizon: and although she beheld, at this intimation of cold being caught, the duke fly eagerly for Mrs. Bouverie's shawl, and stand by her—though not daring to assist her—in an agony of interest, until she had carefully enveloped herself in its drapery; she yet felt not discouraged; and her persevering speculation prompted a determination to fill the morrow with auspicious opportunities for carrying on

her projects: and as with sails unfurled they now proceeded homewards, she coaxingly addressed her mother—

"Oh! mamma, this day has passed so enchantingly, I think I should almost weep at its drawing so near its close; only I am sure, when I suggest something like a renewal of it to-morrow, you will, like a dear, sweet, kind, beneficent woman as you are, not say a cruel negative.—You know Mrs. Bouverie, from her long inflicted quarantine, has seen none of the beauties of our neighbourhood; and cannot you manage a party for to-morrow, to show her the Fish-ponds, the Bleeding Rock, and the Lover's Seat?"

"Not to-morrow, certainly, my love," returned Lady Melcombe; "for how could I, without more time allowed me, collect provisions for so large a party as here assembléd, not one of which can we consent to lose, beside the addition of your other four sisters and their governess, who would think it hard to be excluded from a party of that description given by me?"

"*How* did his grace collect so sumptu-

'ous an entertainment on an equally short notice, mamma?"

"The duke having done so, increases my difficulty:—his profusion must necessarily have created a famine in the land I must seek my supplies through."

"Oh! pray Lady Melcombe, allow it to be a pic nic!" exclaimed all the martial host in a breath, "and deprive us not of so delightful a project for to-morrow. We will each man go foraging at early dawn; each engage to bring into the general stores a sufficient ratio for our own consumption through the day."

"Let it be so, my dear," said Lord Melcombe; "and allow each individual's exploits and achievements, in this purveying ways and means to add to our amusement; and on a future day do you provide us with a gipsy *fête* in your own park; where as many beauties of nature abound as in any part of the neighbourhood."

Adelaide sighed that all those pleasures were projecting in the absence of Montagu, since no one would enjoy them more than he would; none contribute so much to the fascinations of the scene; and then

to her they might prove days of happy amusement.

Every thing was arranged for the morrow ere the yacht again cast anchor; and boats awaiting their coming safely conveyed them to shore; from whence they proceeded to the barracks; where, in the mess-room of his grace's regiment, an elegant collation was laid out.

Another portion of the fleeter Time passed away on halcyon wings, too rapidly for the wishes of many of the party, and brought too soon the hour of separation; but as a speedy re-muster was in view, to assuage the pangs of reluctant parting, consolation seemed to inspire fortitude, and suppressed those tears which started to some of the fair ones' eyes; yet, ere sleep closed them in the forgetfulness of sorrow, the most beautiful eyes that had been on this marine excursion shed many a scalding tear; for Adelaide at length alone, with her head sunk on her pillow, which her youth, innocence, health, and the happy promise which first dawned to her on her marriage, ought to have made a pillow of rest, gave to her anguished heart

the sad relief of weeping the menaced dangers of that attachment of her husband to another, which had so betrayed itself to public observation, that even a libertine presumed to build hopes upon it, of seducing her: nor did her trickling tears cease their overflow, until downright fatigue, both mental and bodily, taught Nature's kind nurse to lull her to a short repose.

## CHAPTER XX.

At early dawn poor Adelaide again arose, unaided by Obearn, and cheered by those hopes her long matins ever inspired her with: she wrote her diurnal despatch to Montagu, filled with accounts of the preceding day's amusement, and the arrangements for new gayeties; and entreating him, in the simplicity of her heart, if he disapproved of so much dissipation for her, or experienced any unpleasant feelings relative to the society she was thus constantly in, to come home without delay, and release her from it.

During this morning's breakfast, Lord Woodley conducted himself with the most perfect correctness towards Adelaide; who, however, rejoiced when this repast was ended, as it brought her nearer to the moment in which her affectionate, yet apprehensive heart, expected the gratification of a promised letter from her husband; and although her fears tremulously whispered, that in it she might possibly discern

a decrease of those feelings he professed for her in the moment of their parting, yet her heart still panted to receive it, for it would be traced by his hand; and whilst doing so, his thoughts must have strayed to her from the dangerous Lady Marian.

At length the courier, who was daily despatched to Hastings for the Melcombe Park letters, arrived with his packet.—The bloom of Adelaide began to increase, her heart to bound, and her respiration to grow difficult:—her anxious eyes followed each movement of Lord Melcombe, as he distributed the letters; and at each new delivery her breath became shorter, her cheeks paler; and at length, sick, *sick* at heart, conviction told her there was not one for her.

Her hands now clasped each other in the intuitive impulse of despair; her eyes sought the ground; and grief and shame bowed her head to her bosom, to seek concealment of her humiliating feelings, as a neglected, disregarded wife; nor could the information quickly conveyed by Lady Maria, that she had received a letter from Miss Delemere, in which she was most

affectionately and flatteringly mentioned, recall the interest of Adelaide to other themes; for what to her at that moment was the estimation, the flattering eulogiums of the whole world, if Montagu no longer thought of even a promise to her? To weep in company she retained too much self-possession for; and to escape from that company, without betraying the cause, she could not easily effect: great, therefore, was her relief, when the information of her servant being arrived with a hamper of provisions, afforded her an opportunity of quitting the room.

This summons to action recalled the drooping energies of her mind to their post; and instead of following her first impulse, by flying to her room to weep her disappointment, as the herald of her direful defeat, she resolved not to allow her fortitude, without more positive conviction, to be subdued; and she therefore turned her steps to where Dennis awaited her commands; hope whispering her, as she hastened to him, that possibly, by some hurry-occasioned mistake in the address, Dennis was the bearer of a treasure for her.

But Dennis had no letter for her; and Adelaide, from this second disappointment, almost suffocating with heart-riving emotion, mechanically smiled as she listened to the account of what her cook had sent; while her heart was with Bouverie, trying to form excuses for his omission, more to his advantage, and less to her grief, than devotion to the siren Marian; and eagerly Hope whispered, "that cross posts might be tardy; that hasty migrations, and press of business, might have prevented his dedicating his pen to her; and that to-morrow, in twenty-four long and anxious hours, she might receive a letter from her beloved, to make her blush for her unkind suspicions."

By aid of the Roscoville supplies, and the diligence of her cook and Dennis, Adelaide's hamper made a sumptuous and exuberant addition to the stores of this pic nic party; and during this, her temporary absence, Lord Melcombe having quitted the room too, Lady Clarinda eagerly seized the opportunity of inquiring from her mother, what day her rural *fête* was to be?

"The waning state of the moon, whose light we must rejoice in to lengthen out

the evening, obliges me to name an early day," replied Lady Melcombe—" the day after to-morrow."

" And pray, ma'am," demanded Lady Clarinda anxiously, yet hesitatingly; "and what are we to do to-morrow?"

" Rest ourselves," replied her mother gravely; " and learn, from a little seasonable reflexion, that amusement is not the only object in life."

" But, mamma, prompt reflexion tells us, that Mrs. Bouverie's stay here will be but short; and those officers of her husband's regiment, who have been so polite to us, will expect to be asked here every day while she remains, to escort us to all those places you promised to show her."

" I shall take Mrs. Bouverie to Winchelsea to-morrow, merely for a morning's drive, and shall want no other escort than what our own inmates supply."

" Really, ma'am, you cannot mean to be so shabby," said the highly disconcerted Lady Clarinda; who, after some feelings of impeding embarrassment, continued—" I—I—that is, the duke, for one, will be *horridly* disappointed, for he—he put in so

evidently for some hope of the kind, that —that I, under the unlucky mistake of believing you projected it, told him we should depend on his grace for attending us on our parties, and dining with us every day while Mrs. Bouverie continued our guest."

"Good Heaven! Clarinda!" exclaimed her alarmed mother; "what means this unusual flippancy in inviting men to your father's table unauthorized by him?—I hope you are not such a maniac to use yourself and Sir Edward so ill; to fly off from him, after luring him into Sussex by your encouragement in town, in pursuit of an ignis fatuus that you will never *catch*; for can any one, who has eyes and observation, disbelieve the intelligence of Captain Clayton, that his grace's attachment to Mrs. Bouverie is unsubdued?"

"But that is no reason it should always remain so, or continue proof against a skilful attack," replied Lady Clarinda, endeavouring to laugh off her mother's displeasure—"They say love cannot long survive a total annihilation of hope; and Mrs. Bouverie regards him no more than she

does the good folks in the moon: so dear, dear mother, do not consign my ardent wishes, and well-formed project, of becoming a duchess, to the ice-house of your thwarting inhospitality."

Lady Melcombe at length wheedled into half-formed hopes of her daughter's success in this effort of her temerity, promised now to arrange all with Lord Melcombe, without awakening his displeasure against Lady Clarinda.

At length the detachment from the barracks arrived, in curricles, gigs, dog-carts, and on horseback; and were not a little pleased to find Lady Melcombe faithful to her intended indulgence, in permitting Ladies Ellen, Louisa, Georgina, and Benedicta, to join the party; for they were all extremely pretty, particularly Lady Ellen, now in her eighteenth year; for whom Lady Marian Harley had mistaken Adelaide.

The carriages for the Melcombe Park inmates were soon drawn up, and filled; when no effort of Lord Woodley's manœuvring could succeed in alluring Adelaide from her seat by his mother in the

barouche, which he drove, to take the seat by him on the box, to view the country to greater advantage.

At Hastings the carriages were abandoned; and as the road was bad, and the distance trifling, the party proceeded on foot to the prettily wooded fish-ponds, where they found in waiting the cavalry messmen, from Bexhill, to learn the spot fixed on to dine; which being marked out, and the hour appointed, the party proceeded from the ponds to the romantically pleasing little spot called the Bleeding Rock, where seating themselves on banks, amid the sheltering foliage of the place, they remained a considerable time, for the ostensible purpose of resting; though to some of the individuals assembled a more desirable purpose was answered; that of conversing, or flirting, with those they most admired.

Adelaide's chosen companions during her walk, and this long rest, were Lady Melcombe and her daughter Ellen; and from the duke attaching himself principally to this trio, Lady Clarinda found no chance given her to manœuvre, unless she could draw Adelaide to her side; who at length

started from her seat, where she had been admiring how rationally and collectedly his grace contrived to converse with her mother upon politics, when his whole soul was rivetted on her too fascinating guest: and now, impelled by her speculating projects, commenced a lively retort-challenging attack upon his grace, drawn from allusions to the name of the place, and its legend; which the duke replied to with that spirit of gallantry which she invoked; but in which he warily took care to utter nothing that might ensnare his honour:—but Adelaide was present, and he allowed his wit to ebulliate, in his fond wish to please — to entertain;—and oh! rapturous thought!—if possible, to charm her.

At length Lord Melcombe gave the signal for proceeding to their next place of destination, the Lover's Seat; where again Lady Clarinda assailed the duke with the artillery of her vivacity: and by her skilful management secured him for her escort down the steep upon which this seat stood; but not until, with a wary eye, his grace had observed there was no danger likely to befall Adelaide, in her descent;

having a detachment of a dozen strong to guard her down a declivity, which she, from early habit at Seaview, could have fearlessly scampered down with ease alone.

From this exalted monument of clandestine wooing, our party proceeded back to the Fish-ponds, where they found a large squad of cooks, with camp utensils of every denomination for culinary purposes; with sumpter donkeys, and bas horses innumerable, which had been laden with stores sufficient to supply a little army; while, at a short distance from them, were stationed the Melcombe Park servants, with their ratio of provisions, &c.;—and all sets busily employed in preparation for their respective masters.

A most cheerful dinner succeeded; and Adelaide wore the semblance of the cheerfulness that reigned: but it was only in semblance, for in heart she was sad; for, in that very scene, Montagu had passed such a day with Lady Marian: and was she sure, that, through it, one thought had even strayed to her.

At length the sun went down; and almost all were unanimous in declaring, that

symptoms of approaching night arrived too soon, to break up the enchantments of the day: but still they were not yet to separate, as tea and other light viands were prepared for the whole party at Melcombe Park; whither they adjourned; and where the vocal powers of the Ladies Melcombe, and the Misses Price, were now aided by their own accompaniments upon the harp and piano forte.

Again the Duke of St. Kilda ventured to intimate a hope that Adelaide would sing; and she felt even more concern, than on the preceding day, at every motive, which had before actuated her upon the subject, still compelling her to disappoint his wish; since, during the whole day, his conduct had been so guarded, so marked by the venerating homage of propriety towards her, that not one word, or tone, or look, of his, for one instant startled or wounded the sensitive feelings of her mind; although not for one moment, through it, could she conceive herself absent from his thoughts; for, in every instance where inconvenience, or annoyance, seemed to await her, the duke, although conversing

with some other person, was still in readiness to secure her from it.—If a bramble menaced her drapery, a branch obtruded to brush her as she passed; like the genii of the wood, he was ready to extricate her from the one, or gently holding back the other, live upon the smile of gratitude he received, until some other demand for her thanks beamed on him its successor.

Lady Melcombe, not thinking it necessary to invite more than a select number of this military host to that dinner, on the morrow, Lady Clarinda had invited the duke to, made her selection accordingly; and deeming it equally unnecessary to have their attendance to Winchelsea, forbore, when she reminded his grace of his engagement at Melcombe Park, to intimate any thing of this intended excursion; when Lady Clarinda, not satisfied at this omission, exclaimed:—

"Oh! mamma, how you disappoint me! I had absolutely set my heart upon going in the duke's curricle to Winchelsea tomorrow, to point out to him, as we drove along, where some of our Sussex beauties live; for yesterday his grace was so un-

courteous to the neighbourhood to say, there were no beauties whom he had seen of the county but at Melcombe Park: and lo! you do not ask him to go with us; and I shall not have such an opportunity again of showing him where, and where, and where, he may have a chance of losing his heart."

The duke was too anxious to pass every hour of his life in the same circle with Adelaide, not gallantly to offer a petition to Lady Melcombe, to accede to the wish which her lovely daughter had honoured him by;—a petition, which her ladyship could not in urbanity prove inexorable to; and, in consequence of this arrangement, our heroine ventured to request permission for Lady Ellen to occupy her sister's thus vacated place in the carriage to Winchelsea; since, from the moment she learned his grace thought the interesting Ellen bore a resemblance to her, she had cherished the hope that the amiable Duke of St. Kilda might regain his lost happiness, by transferring his attachment to this daughter of Lord Melcombe.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Although Bouverie had evinced so little punctuality in his promised correspondence, Adelaide arose again at early dawn, to write her journal to be despatched to him that morning; and when the breakfast bell assembled the family, she attended its summons with a beating heart; since, so soon after the repast it called her to, her hopes or fears relative to her dearest interest, were to be realized.

At length the letters arrived from the Hastings post-office, when promptly Lord Melcombe delivered one to the panting Adelaide, from Montagu; and worlds would she have given to quit the room to read it, that she might then give free indulgence to the sensations its contents awakened: but as no one else left the circle to peruse their epistles, she could not do so; and at last she summoned sufficient resolution to sever the seal and read—

"If you could know half the pain I suffered at parting from you, Adelaide, you

would not have neglected to fulfil your promise of writing to me.

"We are this moment setting off for Seaford; but I have despatched Lee back to Eastbourne, to inquire if my hoped-for, fondly hoped-for, treasure is there? Should he bring me no intelligence from you, I shall assuredly make my instant *congé* to the general, and fly to relieve my agonizing alarm, of illness having caused your silence: but if Lee brings me the cordial my heart sickens for, my Adelaide will not see, for some days longer, her now

"Most anxious husband,

"MONTAGU BOUVERIE."

The distress of Adelaide at Montagu's not having received her first packet at least, to fill his mind with any species of inquietude, overspread her eloquent countenance with its sympathetic tone; while the joy which thrilled through her heart at the affection his letter evinced, being a selfish feeling, sunk from view, while Montagu's unnecessary anxiety pained her tenderness; and this sorrowing expression gave the still delusively hoping Lord *Woodley* a suspicion, that her husband's

letter was no kind one; and believing the rising bloom upon her before pale cheeks, the bloom of indignation at indifference unequivocally evinced in that composition, his lordship, eager to enforce more firmly upon her observation the strong symptoms of disregard the brevity of this epistle indicated, with an air of *badinage* exclaimed—

"I hope, lovely Mrs. B., the colonel's letter has to boast its proverbial accompaniment; for it seems, indeed, short as brevity could make it."

Adelaide now, indeed, blushed indignantly at the invidiousness of this remark; and blushed again with the reluctant feelings of bashfulness, shrinking from displaying affection expressed for her, as anxiety to exculpate Montagu from these suspicions of his being an inconstant, inattentive husband, so often, so distressingly insinuated by Lord Woodley, suggested the idea of showing this letter of brevity as Bouverie's vindication; and, as the alternative stood, Montagu's fame bore down her own sensitive feelings; and, after a moment's pause of delicacy struggling with affection, she, with a smile, replied—

"Your lordship may gratify your curiosity relative to its accompaniment; and learn how to address your wife with brevity and affection, when military movements compel you to conciseness, by reading this short letter."

Lord Woodley's painful curiosity overbalancing every propriety of feeling, he absolutely took the offered epistle; and, after having perused its laconic lines three times, and each time as if he was accurately weighing every expression in it, to pervert its meaning, he returned it to Adelaide, with cheeks glowing with a vexatious disappointment; and after an attempt at raillery, upon this *billet-doux* proving a rich cordial to her love-sick heart, precipitately quitted the room.

Adelaide, as speedily as she could accomplish her wish, retired to her own apartment, to read again and again this attestation of her husband's affection, and to grieve for his uneasiness; yet deriving consolation from the hope, that his inquietude had been hushed by the receipt of her first two packets: but at length from her affection-inspired meditation she

was aroused, by the chiming of a time-piece, into recollection, that the hour appointed for setting out to Winchelsea was near; when hastily equipping herself for this excursion, she descended to the saloon; where, to her surprise and chagrin, she found the Duke of St. Kilda alone.

Although Adelaide wished to retreat, she could not make the effort, as if she feared either his grace or herself; and, with as little embarrassment as she could in possibility effect, she advanced, and with the sweet cordiality of esteem spoke her morning greetings to him.

The duke's heart bounded and fluttered, as through flattery's inspiration he construed the bright radiance of her animation, which spread its finest bloom o'er her cheeks, and gave to her eyes a sparkling contrast of its brilliancy, to their pensive languor of the preceding day; until a suspicion of the fact, so blighting to his eagerly cherished hope, arose to crush his rising joy; and falteringly he inquired—"If she had heard from Colonel Bouverie?"

Adelaide's affirmative instantly blanched

the before flushing cheeks of this deeply enamoured peer; whose bosom heaving with a convulsive struggle, a moment elapsed ere he could articulate—

"Oh! how unequivocally did the irradiancy of your expressive countenance proclaim it!—Happy, happy Bouverie!"

The cadence of the duke, in his last sentence, thrilled to pity's seat in the bosom of his beautiful auditress; who, fearing that he should continue any thing more embarrassing in this distressing strain, with a bright blush of shame at uttering what was inconsistent with truth, apologized "for being compelled to leave his grace, as she had forgotten her handkerchief in her dressing-room."

"No, Mrs. Bouverie, no; you need not leave me," exclaimed the duke mournfully; "you have forgotten nothing consistent with the most sensitive feelings of delicacy's inspirations.—It was my memory only that was transgressing towards a lapse; but pray forgive me!—The overburdened heart is often a sad egotist;—but I know I promised you never to offend

again; and I endeavour to keep that promise faithfully."

Adelaide, with the mild dignity of inherent virtue, was instantly reseated; her attempt to go being rightly understood, and awakening prompt recollection of propriety, she felt she could no longer, without insult to his grace's honour, seem to fly from a *tête-à-tête*, she still most anxiously wished should find an interruption.

To terminate an awkward pause, Adelaide spoke of their approaching excursion; when the duke said, with a languid smile, "he believed Lady Clarinda would gladly resign her place in his curricle, did she know how he dreaded a *tête-à-tête* with her, as a companion the most ill-assorted for a melancholy man."

"I should rather consider it an excellent specific to chase *ennui*," replied Adelaide, "to be drawn by a lively daughter of wit and spirit into animated conversation."

"Mrs. Bouverie," exclaimed the duke, "this is not your own sincere opinion of Lady Clarinda. Did not good nature veil your sentiments, you would substitute

other words, of widely different import, when you portrayed the *vivacité de l'ésprit* of Lady Clarinda Melcombe."

"I know too little of her ladyship to venture a decided opinion of her character; but here comes a fair daughter of this house, who, I am almost intuitively led to a conviction, is all she sembles;—gentle in temper; inartificial in manners; sound in principal; and highly gifted with intellectual endowments," said Adelaide, opening a door to the lawn, and beckoning the approach of Lady Ellen, who was slowly advancing from a green-house, with her parasol inverted, full of flowers—"Hers is a mind, I confidently predict, worth analyzing; and I would recommend its study to any man who wishes for domestic happiness."

"My wish was blasted!" said the duke, with the strong emphasis of despondence—"The analysis of this very lovely Ellen's mind is no pursuit for me.—The world contains no second Adelaide."

Our heroine darted through the door she had opened, as he came to this pause, and accelerated her meeting with the fair

Ellen; who, on entering the saloon, laid the contents of her parasol upon a table, and with a bright blush, and an air of genuine *naïveté*, requested his grace to aid her in selecting the prettiest flowers for Mrs. Bouverie.

"If they are to be emblematical, Lady Ellen," the duke replied, "we must not only select them from the most beautiful, but the sweetest of your stores."

"Indeed we must," returned her ladyship, with a strong emphasis upon each word of this sentence, that charmed the duke to rapture; when at this moment Lady Clarinda entered; who, perceiving the look of animated approbation his grace was regarding her sister with, in a tone very analogous to asperity exclaimed—

"Bless me! how picturesquely employed Lady Ellen and his grace of St. Kilda are! Arranging flowers to strew our path to Winchelsea, I presume!"

"Not exactly," said Lady Ellen—"the duke is, at my request, only selecting a nosegay for Mrs. Bouverie; and then my purpose is to make little bouquets for

mamma, Miss Price, Maria, and Emma, who are all so fond of flowers."

By this time the duke had succeeded in forming two small bouquets exactly similar, composed of the sweetest, rarest, and most beautiful of the flowers; but all with blossoms opening into bloom, none full blown; which he gracefully presented to Lady Ellen and our heroine: and as he had given one to Lady Ellen, and made no difference in their composition, Adelaide unhesitatingly accepted hers with a grateful smile, and placed it, as her ladyship disposed of hers, in her bosom.

The duke's heart now thrilled, and throbbed, and bounded, and so did Lady Clarinda's; but his was with hope and joy; hers with alarm and vexation. Ten thousand nosegays to Adelaide she would have seen him present unmoved; for there, she believed, as his passion was hopeless, it must soon expire: but his grace showing attention, in any shape, to any other woman than Mrs. Bouverie, in preference to herself, and that woman younger and prettier than she was, filled her with dismay: and as he attempted not to make up flowers

for her, she no longer delayed rallying her arts to recommence her spell; and, with an alluring combination of innocence and archness, offered to make him a bouquet, now he seemed too weary to proceed; and then, in sportive caprice, she declared she must give up the attempt, since the principal thing she wished to give him—heart's ease—was not in Ellen's stores: and as she uttered this with a thrilling tone, meant to carry effect, which her speaking eyes added their force to, the intended charm was dissolved by the entrance of Miss Price and Lord Woodley; and, immediately after, the whole party assembling, they set out for Winchelsea; from whence they returned in good time to a cheerful dinner circle.

Ere Adelaide retired to rest, she read again and again the letter of her husband; which she laid under her pillow, as the sweet rose of peace, to inspire her dreams with all the rare flowers of growing happiness; and soon the rose of peace attracted the poppies of Morpheus to mingle with it, in a garland for her brows; and, in combined influence, yielded her a sweet, a sound repose; which did not dissipate

until Obearn drew aside her curtains, and blessed the darling of her fond and tender care.

But this long and renovating sleep of Adelaide's shortened not her diurnal despatch to Montagu; for she aided time, by eager rapidity of execution, that she might leave nothing unsaid to express her sorrow at the delay of her packets.

The bright sunbeams of cheering hope, which warmed the heart of Adelaide, in the delightful expectation of receiving another kind, affectionate letter from Montagu, announcing the receipt of some of her packets, was sadly overcast by the lowering clouds of disappointment; no letter from him arrived; and this defeat of expectation weighed heavily on her heart, until the hope-exhilarating suggestion arose, of his writing not, because he was on his return; and the fondly cherished idea of seeing him that very day, gave its radiance to her aspect.

All the neighbouring families who were in the circle of Lord and Lady Melcombe's *acquaintance*, were invited to this day's *rural fête*, as well as the military of Bex-

hill; and amongst the first of the assembling guests was the Duke of St. Kilda; when Lady Clarinda hastened to commence her predetermination of being the inseparable companion of Adelaide through the day, to transfix his grace in the circle of her power; and almost vain proved every effort of Adelaide to break from her spells, to join Lady Ellen; for while she retained our heroine by her, no strenuous effort was requisite to attract his grace of St. Kilda to appear as if he breathed only under her ladyship's auspices.

A semicircular line of open marquees, pitched in a most beautifully romantic spot in the park, were arranged for the company to dine in, where upwards of an hundred persons partook of an elegant repast; and during which the martial bands from Bexhill charmed by their melody: and so fascinating was the scene to every individual, that none seemed disposed to break the enchantment of their pleasure until a protracted hour.

At length dispersing groups began again to ramble through the grounds; when Adelaide, not perfectly satisfied with the

speculations of Lady Clarinda so immoveably chaining her in the duke's society for such a length of time that day, now resolutely effected her escape to a temporary refuge between Ladies Maria and Ellen; with whose arms linked in hers she had not long comfortably walked, when Lord Melcombe requested her to honour him with her hand in a reel; when she, feeling neither cause nor inclination to refuse, instantly complied, and was led by his lordship to a platform erected in full view of the village green, where innumerable spectators were assembled to behold the gay revellers.

Lady Maria Melcombe and Lord Ennismore formed the other couple of this commencing reel, in which the rapidly exhausting breath of Lord Melcombe allowed him not long to continue a performer: his place was promptly filled by the Duke of St. Kilda, who excelled in this, his national dance; and though Adelaide had now, in his grace, a partner to show off her own pre-eminence to the most striking advantage, she took the earliest opportunity, without the appearance of fastidious pru

dery, to yield her place to Lady Clarinda; who was alert in readiness to succeed her; and stationed herself between Ladies Emma and Ellen, who were standing near.

The cessation of Adelaide was hailed by Lord Woodley, Captain Hope, and a formidable train of admiring men, to overwhelm her with adulating speeches; which our blushing heroine hesitated not to escape from the annoyance of, by flying to the side of Lady Melcombe the moment her two fair companions were called by their father to form another reel; when instantly the Duke of St. Kilda's breath experiencing exhaustion, he too found reason to consider the spot where Lady Melcombe stood, the one most desirable to remove to.

Dancing continued about an hour, when tea parties were formed in the marquees; where prudence allowed them not to remain long after sunset; and from whence they were conducted, by their hospitable host and hostess, to the house, where all was arranged for dancing to recommence.

As Adelaide approached the mansion, she observed Obearn standing in ambus

amid a clump of shrubs; who, on her smiling recognition, instantly motioned for a conference; when, on drawing near, the seriousness of her nurse's aspect, and the agitation of her manner, alarming her, she eagerly demanded, "What could be the matter?"

"Nothing, my child," replied Obearn, with an effort at composure, "but impatience for your return, as I have a letter from my master for you."

"Oh! from Montagu! then give it, give it quickly to me, my own dear nursy!"

"It is in your dressing-room, love."

Adelaide waited not to give utterance to the upbraidings that murmured through her heart at this delay to her happiness; for, winged with impatience to obtain her treasure, she flew to her apartments; but the door was locked; and the wondering, and now half-dismayed Adelaide had to wait for her less fleet nurse, who was in no hurry to give to the darling of her fond affection pain.

They entered the dressing-room together; and as Obearn presented the letter

to the impatient receiver, she falteringly said:—

"I fear, my child, that letter will not reward your anxiety to obtain it."

The heart of Adelaide was electrified; and her hand was stayed, by the shock, from the act of severing the seal; and with difficulty could she articulate an inquiry of her nurse's meaning.

"I scarcely know if what I have to relate ought to preface your reading of your letter," replied Obearn affectionately, and feelingly taking her long precious charge in her arms. "All I can confidently say is, that I fear you must prepare your mind, my darling, for this being no very pleasant epistle."

"Oh!" faintly articulated the heart-chilled Adelaide, "tell me all,—all you know, to—to prepare me, Norah, for unkindness I did not expect from Montagu."

"My intelligence is from Dennis," replied Obearn, "who is here, and who learned from the groom, that my master set out all in a hurry this morning from Seaford, after the post again disappointed him of hearing from you, and came full speed to this vil-

lage, where he dismounted at the inn, and sent Richard home; who had scarcely began to clean his horses, when my master arrived at the cottage on foot in such agitation, and looking so ghastly, that he quite terrified Dennis."

"Oh! my husband is ill! Cruel, cruel Norah! not to tell me all before!" frantickly exclaimed Adelaide, rushing towards the door, to fly to her home, and Montagu.

With difficulty Obearn led her back, and obtained belief that he was not ill, except of some delusive, mental malady.

"Instantly," continued Obearn, "he ordered Richard to remount, and gallop off, to order him a chaise and four, to return to the general; and the interval from Richard's departure, until the arrival of the chaise, he passed in pacing the room like one bereaved of senses, and in writing this letter, which with a stern voice he bade Dennis hasten to deliver to you; nor could the entreaties of Dennis urge him to take any kind of nourishment, although Richard said he tasted none *since* breakfast; and as he bounded

into the chaise, he ordered Richard to set out with the horses at five o'clock in the morning for Seaford. Dennis immediately hastened hither with this letter, which I would not have given you, to disturb your innocent happiness, until after the company had departed, only I thought it possible it might be necessary you should speedily know its contents, to prepare your answer to go by Richard."

The violence of Adelaide's agitation, through alarm at some apprehended direful calamity, was so tremendous, that with difficulty could her paralyzed fingers open the letter: but the crooked and disjointed lines it contained so augmented the agony of her apprehensions, that the sense of sight seemed lost; and she was compelled to swallow some water, and rest her throbbing temples a few moments on the sympathizing bosom of her feeling nurse, ere she could see to read.

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